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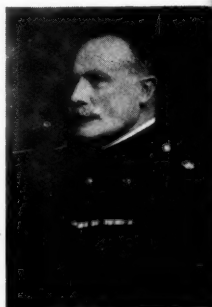
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P.N.N.15

## BOOK NOTES FOR JANUARY

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THIS novel marks another new departure on the part of P. C. Wren, being neither a Legion nor an Indian novel, neither a seafaring tale nor a criminological study, the principal scene of the story being Mecca. The hero of the book is that Sinclair Noel Brodie Dysart, known to his friends as Sinbad, whose three years' voyage of the "Valkyrie" formed the subject of "Action and Passion." Brodie and his friend Dacre join in a mad undertaking of gunrunning which is a mere prelude to adventures as thrilling as anything Major Wren has done. After amazing experiences in the Sahara desert they join the retinue of a Moroccan Kaid and make the pilgrimage to Mecca. The scenes over which these fascinating adventures work out could only have been portrayed by an author who has had actual knowledge of them, and, because of this, *Sinbad the Soldier* will be found as absorbing as anything that P. C. Wren has written.



P. C. WREN.

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## BOOK NOTES FOR JANUARY

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### *The Odyssey of an Emigrant*

MR. HAROLD BALDWIN, the author of *A Farm for Two Pounds*, has a most entertaining life wherefrom to draw the material for this enthralling volume of reminiscences. An emigré's life in Canada before the war was not an enviable one, but, to a man to whom creature comforts meant nothing as compared with the thrills and dangers of winning a livelihood under conditions of the utmost hardship, it meant all the things which we are apt to narrow down and limit by the phrase "self-expression." It is a fascinating experience to follow Mr. Baldwin's narrative up to the day when he had become complete master of his farm. His novel published last year, under the title of *Pelicans in the Sky*, dealt with his life in the guise of fiction. Here is real, unadorned fact.



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## COUPON FOR ACROSTIC COMPETITION

JANUARY, 1935



# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

EDITED BY  
LORD GORELL

JANUARY, 1935.

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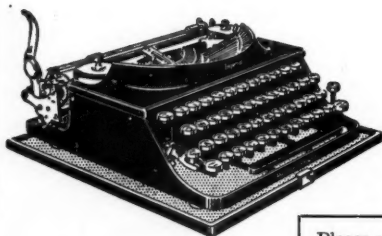
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THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JANUARY 1935.

THE SPANISH MAIN TO-DAY.

I. GUNS AND GRAFT.

BY RAWDON HOARE.

THE Spanish Main is living up to its traditions. Millions of pounds are being derived to-day from Central America, not in yellow metal wrested from Spanish galleons by the buccaneers, but from the rich fertile soil of Caribbean Republics, vast tracks of which are now under cultivation.

Since its declaration of Independence in November, 1865, Honduras—one of the lesser known States—has undergone one continual period of trouble and strife. Revolution following upon revolution; troops pillaging the land and terrifying a defenceless populace; while politicians, in power for uncertain periods cause the few men, who really have the interests of the people at heart, to struggle helplessly in the stormy sea of bribery and misrule.

In 1924 revolution overwhelmed the country, and revolutionary troops occupied the hills overlooking Tela—a port of some importance built by the United Fruit Company largely for the export of bananas. In the early hours of the morning, the foreign community was awakened by machine guns and rifles firing between the hills and the town. By noon the situation became sufficiently serious to line the inside walls of the wooden bungalows with mattresses, and for the owners to lie down under cover while the troops fought it out. But the situation became so unpleasant and the government troops so disagreeable over their demands for impossible sums of money from the much-harassed General Manager, that it was considered wise to cable for help.

The cruiser *Denver* arrived with bluejackets and marines. A detachment was landed, and the officer in charge demanded an explanation from the officer commanding the government troops. The usual apologies were made, assurances given that the revolting troops had been defeated and had departed for the interior, and that the General Manager would no longer be bothered about his cash.

The *Denver* sailed away, her captain satisfied that a delicate situation had been tactfully handled.

Twelve hours elapsed and they were fighting again. But this time not only was the General Manager requested for money, but he was locked in his office until it could be produced. The bullets thickened and the situation became so grave that a number of the women and children were sent for a cruise on one of the Company ships.

So the marines returned, this time exceedingly angry, for the captain had been made to look a fool. Guns were trained on the old part of the town occupied by the government troops, and detachments of bluejackets and marines were landed to protect foreign life and property. They remained for over three weeks, until a special representative was sent by the United States to mediate between the two factions. After considerable difficulty matters were smoothed out and Dr. Miguel Paz Barona was elected President.

But in 1927, the flames of revolution shot up again, and General Ferera crossed the border from Salvador in March of that year. He carried all before him and captured the town of Progreso, about sixty miles from the coast and a centre of American activities. The General's behaviour was exemplary, and it was not until his somewhat hasty departure to the hills under pressure from the government troops did the trouble begin.

The government General, who defeated Ferera and occupied Progreso, was not only notorious for his anti-foreign tendencies, but also for his love of a bottle of wine. The victory excited him, and the two emotions joined hands, resulting in an unpleasant time for the foreigners living in the town, many of whom, including the writer, were imprisoned in their houses under an armed guard—unfairly accused of having 'meddled' with revolutionary affairs. Cables were sent for a battleship, but before she arrived the Minister of War emerged from some place of safety, left for Progreso, and straightened matters out.

Again, in 1931, the entire trade of the country became paralysed when General Bonilla—an ex-minister of war—attempted a *coup d'état* by capturing San Pedro, an important town. But fortunately his attempts were frustrated and order was quickly restored, but not until the foreigners had experienced a very disagreeable three weeks.

The soils of Honduras are rich, and from the coastal areas alone, at least twenty-six million bunches of bananas are exported yearly. But from this twenty-six million not more than four million bunches are produced from Honduranian capital.

American companies are gradually buying up all available banana land, and the time is not far distant when the independent planter will cease to exist. There are still a few landowners to be found, who, at the beginning of banana growing, rented out their properties for small rents and long leases to foreign companies before they fully realised the true value of the soil. These leases will not expire until the land becomes valueless and unsuitable for banana cultivation, even, in some cases, being entirely ruined on account of the fatal banana disease.

Banana plantations—amounting to over 130,000 acres of cultivated land—extend along the coast, then inland up the Uloa valley, one of the most fertile spots for banana cultivation in the world and one of the most picturesque, for the towering mountains form a background of ever-changing colours to the river as it winds its way like some silver thread through the vivid green.

Not only do American companies control many acres of land, but ports, such as Tela and Puerta Castilla, have been built especially to facilitate the export of this golden fruit, and it can be said with truth that politics and bananas walk hand in hand. Self-contained is the port of Tela, for apart from being the Divisional Headquarters, it is the railway terminus for one of the Company lines and also where the General Manager lives, surrounded by his executive staff and sub-managers, the latter controlling various departments, such as : agriculture, railroads, construction, engineering, accounting, hospitals, merchandise and many other branches necessary to a vast organisation.

In the middle of these plantations of shady banana mats, runs the railway, used for all purposes of communication with the coast, and along the lines are scattered the plantation houses built on concrete piles and painted yellow with red corrugated-iron roofs ; behind them flows the river, ever turbulent in its moods of flood, but prevented from sweeping away the houses and gardens by high mud-banks built along the sides. The gardens are a mass of flowers growing in luxuriant profusion under the tropical sun and rains ; over the porches climb bougainvilleas both crimson and white, while maidenhair and other lovely ferns flourish beneath the shade of the houses. These splashes of colour amid the restful green of the tall banana mats make a pleasing picture for the traveller along the line.

In spite of the attractive profits which fall into the hands of shareholders, foreign companies work under intense difficulties.

Hampered on one side by a weak and unstable government ; irritated on the other by continual dissatisfaction among the labourers, caused by ignorant and badly organised Labour Unions, whose unreasonable and impossible demands are for ever appearing in the papers and being preached abroad to uneducated minds, officials of these companies are, indeed, in a delicate position, and one that is in no way understood by the outside world.

One of these frequent strikes resulted in an anti-foreign demonstration and an attempt was made by the strikers to seize two engines and some carriages, so as to hasten their journey to the coast, where all the foreign women and children had been sent.

At that time I was superintendent of a banana district, and for twenty-four hours had to stand the threats of strikers, because I refused them the use of the engines and rolling-stock under my charge. I gave the excuse that they were out of order, and secretly instructed the engineer to remove some vulnerable part. But the strikers were far from satisfied and the leader, after banging his fist on my office desk, threatened the most drastic action unless we gave way within twenty-four hours. Fortunately, the excitement of looting a near-by village took their minds off the engines, and some government troops arrived before further unpleasantness occurred. But the occasion had not been an agreeable one, for we had all realised that such an undisciplined mob was capable of almost any fiendish act.

Bribery is the frequent resource of a perplexed Manager, but that bribery must be administered with care and discretion, otherwise, like a pack of hungry wolves, the subordinate officials will be found lurking about his office door, and, when refused admittance, will commence stirring up anti-foreign propaganda of every description.

In almost every district occupied by a foreign company the local Commandante has to be placed on the pay-roll at anything from \$75 to \$200 a month.

The individual attitude of Americans towards the Central American race is not always tactful. So many young Americans come down as employees of commercial concerns with feelings that they must teach these ignoramuses how to behave. The result is unfortunate, for the Latin-American has an extremely sensitive mind and usually excellent manners—a combination not always enjoyed by his northern neighbours.

Although the natives of Central America dislike seeing the vast



products derived from their fertile soil fall into American hands, they forget the benefits they have received from American capital. The coastal areas of the Caribbean were at one time extremely unhealthy, but American companies—particularly the United Fruit Company—have now carried out extensive medical research, and have built first-class up-to-date hospitals along the coast. Native employees of the companies are entitled to free treatment, and outsiders to treatment at a very reduced rate. The Rockefeller Institute has also spent many millions of dollars in research work, and the experimental snake farm at Tela, Honduras, has greatly reduced the death-roll from these poisonous fangs. In areas occupied by American companies, the peons and their families are given free inoculation against malaria, and representatives from the Rockefeller Institute do all in their power to teach them a cleanly mode of life. These same representatives journey through the interior, teaching and striving with the half-civilised inhabitants.

Tegucigalpa, the capital, presents a scene of amazing intrigue and secrecy during the sitting of Congress. Representatives from every well-known firm operating in the country meet to discuss whatever concessions they may require, and also, incidentally, to advertise the generosity of their respective firms to the country at large! All goes well—until two companies require the same concession; then the trouble begins. Government officials lick their lips in anticipation of the rich pickings likely to fall into their pockets, while Company representatives endeavour to obtain favour with the President and his Ministers.

For some years, continual war has existed between two companies regarding the concession for erecting a bridge over a well-known river. One company urgently requires the concession to enable them to increase their business, whereas the other is endeavouring to prevent the grant, in the vain hope of obtaining the valuable land which would be rendered useless to the opposing forces, unless the grant could be obtained. It is amusing to watch the fight; almost like two dogs, who are both rather timid, watching a particularly succulent bone. On these occasions it can scarcely be said that the example set by American and European business men is likely to prove very elevating to the Honduranian official; on the contrary, I should say that his natural tendencies for graft would be increased.

It must not be imagined that bananas, although by far the

most important, are the only products of Honduras. Sugar is also grown by two large companies on the coast; while timber, particularly mahogany and rosewood, is found in large quantities in both coastal and interior areas. Copper and tin mines are scattered throughout the interior, but large numbers of these mines have now been abandoned, owing to difficulties of interior communication. Gold and silver unquestionably exist, and many are the tales of murder and adventure, on their discovery, to be heard from the tropical tramp. The interior, as a whole, has been very little exploited by companies, who are prepared to risk any appreciable investment. But there is little doubt that rich prizes are still to be found, and that the interior presents an interesting field for the pioneer of the future.

Coffee is grown, but only for local consumption. Cigar, cigarette and other small factories are located in La Ceiba and San Pedro, two important coastal towns. Armenians and Syrians control the merchandise business along the coast, and are generally disliked throughout the country, their lives often being in serious jeopardy. American companies have large commissary organisations throughout their estates, which have now been turned into a very paying side line.

Communications present the chief reason for the failure of interior products. Railroads, with one exception of about fifty miles, are entirely controlled by the larger companies, and are only operated along their coastal estates. They are, however, according to the terms of their concessions, forced to operate a specified number of daily passenger and goods trains, quite apart from the large rolling-stock utilised for the transportation of bananas.

Many exciting tales are told about these trains. On one occasion—when I was a passenger from La Ceiba to Tela—the conductor—a Mexican—and an American field engineer had both taken a great deal too much to drink. An argument began about a Hondureño woman, the mistress of the conductor, and the engineer was accused of enticing her away. The engineer whipped out his revolver and aimed it at the conductor's head, but, on discovering that the conductor carried no arms, he replaced the weapon in its holster, but threatened to 'shoot' on the first occasion that he met him armed. A few minutes later the train stopped in front of a plantation house. The conductor—possibly wisely, for the engineer was a crack shot—thought it best to settle the issue then and there, so he borrowed a shotgun from the overseer in charge. Somebody

warned the engineer, who left the train and, with his revolver drawn, prepared for events. But the conductor did not feel inclined to run any risks, so, creeping beneath one of the railway carriages, he shot at almost point-blank range his opponent, who died in hospital a few hours later. A period of great excitement followed, for those who carried 'guns' felt it an excellent opportunity to let them off, and those who did not—I was included in the latter—took cover hastily under the carriage seats until the bullets had been expended and the train—with a new conductor—was again on its way.

The most important towns and villages, about one hundred kilos from the coast, are connected up by railway. But towns, such as the capital, Tegucigalpa, are entirely dependent on very indifferent roads and tracks for communication with the outside world. During the winter months these roads are often quite impassable for motor transport.

A journey to Tegucigalpa is one that the average traveller commences with some trepidation, and the discomfort of not reaching the destination by nightfall in bad weather is well known throughout the country.

The one hundred kilos from the coast to Puerto Rios, a small town situated at the end of the railroad, can be accomplished in an extremely slow, hot and dusty train, into which is crowded a very mixed bag of colours and nationalities. Puerto Rios is reached about midday, where, after a hurried and indigestible lunch, an exchange is made from the train to waiting motor-cars.

The journey now commences to Jaral, a small and dirty village situated on the shores of Lake Johore. The road is particularly bad, and one marvels how the driver can avoid the enormous pit-holes. In wet weather it is not unusual to get completely stuck, and be obliged to continue the journey on mule-back. The country is flat and ugly, there being nothing of particular interest to catch the traveller's eye. If all is well, the lake is reached about three o'clock. Here, a glimpse of the interior beauty of the country is obtained for the first time. A large expanse of placid water, surrounded by low-lying, purple hills with a background of towering mountains, presents a vista which is good to gaze upon. Aching bones, caused by the continual jolting of the motor-cars, are for the moment forgotten in the sudden change of scenery. The lake is crossed in a large, flat-bottomed motor-boat, which has been known to upset the equilibrium of a doubtful

sailor. The voyage only lasts about one hour, and on the opposite shore fresh motor-cars, with excellent drivers, are in readiness.

From there begins one of the most beautiful drives I have ever made, only marred by the appalling and dangerous nature of the roads. The track—for one can call it nothing else—winds up and down the most glorious ravines, passing through small hamlets and pine forests that remind one of an English park. It might be a different country from the hot, dirty, dust-laden coast. The people, too, greet one with a smile, instead of the surly scowl of the banana areas. One might wonder if, perhaps, after all, the politicians were right, and banana cultivation had ruined the country.

The motor continues its perilous journey crashing with unsteady lurches over small broken bridges, with a drop of thousands of feet on either side. At times it may be necessary for the chauffeur to stop and reconnoitre ahead, possibly having to carry out, with the assistance of the passengers, some minor repair to a bridge before crossing.

Siguatopeque, one of the cleanest and most pleasant little towns in Honduras, is reached by nightfall. And the weary travellers, after an excellent Honduranian supper, sink with profound relief into the comfortable, clean beds of the 'Hotel Honduras.' An early start at 4 a.m. in the morning shows a darkened road, with steep, black mountains on either side, soon to be enveloped in the pink haze of the rising sun. The scenery continues magnificent, and after passing through the old Spanish capital, Comayagua, Tegucigalpa, a disappointing town with squalid houses and dirty streets, is reached late in the afternoon.

I have given a brief description of the journey, so that my readers may have some idea of travelling conditions in the country. The same journey, in bad weather, may take, on mule-back, anything from two to five days, while the nights are spent in vermin-infested houses.

One of the first things that strike a traveller in Honduras is that most men carry guns, they love their guns and are prepared to use them at the least provocation; groups of fifteen or more can be seen outside any *cantina* (bar) playing a game of chance each with a revolver dangling by his side. Mixed blood runs in the veins of the Honduranians; descended originally from the Mayas and Indians, they have now, particularly in the coastal

areas, intermingled with Spanish and sometimes negro blood. China, Japan and Africa are all represented in the boiling pot of financial activities over which the American, with his horn-rimmed glasses and large cigar presides, looking down on the populace as some evil necessity to his financial activities, and the earning of the almighty dollar. A mixed crowd, indeed, this strange intermingling of the East and West, almost worthy of some Oriental sea port.

Caribs, a negro race, descended from the Caribs of St. Vincent who were deported in 1796, occupy villages along the Caribbean coast. The population of the interior and more thinly populated areas is of far purer extraction, and Indian tribes are frequently found, all of whom have accepted the Roman Catholic religion. The different types of features observed through the country make an interesting study, and I understand that a book on this subject will shortly be published.

The Honduranian peons are easily handled, and will be found, in many respects, to possess extremely attractive natures. It is true that they have absolutely no regard for life and death, and would far sooner kill an enemy during a drunken brawl than commit some petty theft. But, on the other hand, they easily respond to fair and square treatment, and, once their respect is gained, it is hard to lose, while many of them will always remain extremely faithful. It is only the man with a little education and imbued with the spirit of Labour who becomes dangerous and difficult to handle.

Drink is the curse of the nation, and practically all the frequent murders are committed under the influence of aguardiente, a locally-made rum. As such a high percentage of the male population carry revolvers, it is as well to have no dealings whatever with a drunken man. I have seen aguardiente turn the most peaceful of men into veritable devils, striking at everything within reach in the lust to kill. At these times they can only be compared to wild animals.

On the monthly pay-day of a banana estate of about 12,000 acres it is not uncommon to have three or four men killed, and I have known on one single farm alone the bag to reach as high as eight!

Very little attempt is ever made by the Government to bring these murderers to justice, and a great number of men are at large who boast of having killed anything from five to ten men. Many

cut notches in their revolvers, each one representing a kill. They seem to bear a charmed life, emerging victorious from every drunken *mêlée*.

The police force is entirely inadequate, and only operates in the towns. In the outlying districts, local Commandantes, with a few ragged and barefooted soldiers, are responsible for upholding law and order. Although a great deal of excitement is caused by a murder being reported, the soldiers will scarcely ever leave the railroad in search of the offender, who is probably only hiding a few hundred yards away.

Capital punishment is non-existent, so if the hand of justice does happen to descend on a criminal, he will not get longer than a few months in jail, often to be liberated sooner, on account of the expense he entails to the Government. 'Shot while trying to escape' is sometimes used as an excuse for a mysterious disappearance; but this, as a rule, is only employed when some official considers the offender best out of harm's way.

On one occasion, after I had been shot at and wounded in two places, my assailant was run to earth, but not until the Commandante had been promised rich rewards. The unfortunate man was immediately taken into the jungle and shot so as to cause no further bother. But his relations did, as I shall explain in a later article.

Murders are so frequent that not more than 60 per cent. are ever recorded, as the bodies are either hurriedly buried in the jungle, or thrown into the nearest river. It is not unusual to find the body of a man during one's morning walk or to have one washed up by the river at the bottom of the garden!

Conditions under the present Government during the past year have certainly improved. But until some definite steps are taken towards organising a properly paid police force, Honduras will never become a civilised country. The coast is, in all respects, worse than the interior, a condition due to larger earnings and easier purchase of liquor.

The smouldering dislike for the American and European is gradually increasing year by year. A vein of respect is still, however, to be found wending its way through the mass of Bolshevistic and Labour tendencies—a combination nowadays that goes hand in hand. And there are still Hondurans who have intense love and respect for the Englishman and American, particularly the Englishman. These men can always be counted on for loyal sup-



port, should the Gringo (native expression for white man) get into trouble with their countrymen.

It is hardly surprising that this respect is on the downward path, for the example set by the average Americans in their private lives and morals can scarcely be considered edifying, and must result in the Gringo being thrown from his natural pinnacle.

During the past five years there has been a rough average of three murders a year among Europeans and Americans, some of which were of a particularly brutal nature.

There can be little doubt that the average intelligent Honduranian welcomes the exploitation of Honduras by foreign capital. Probably nobody realises better than they how totally ineffective the efforts of the Government really are, and how in so many ways a debt of gratitude is due to foreign companies. Others go even further, in the wish that the United States may intervene in the affairs of the country, until law and order are placed on a permanent footing. They feel that the Republic could produce brain-power, combined with true patriotism, providing there was some sturdy pillar upon which to lean. But the average members of the nation dread the possible intervention of the United States more than anything in the world; and they would far sooner continue to live a life of revolution and political disorder. It is also doubtful whether foreign companies would altogether welcome such intervention, for, if the Government were placed on a more stable basis, taxation would unquestionably be increased, although that would mean a far pleasanter country for their employees to exist in.

It seems that something should be done towards supporting the Government of this turbulent Republic, and to assist them in enforcing their excellent code of Spanish laws. The possibilities are already there; an excellent tropical climate along the coast, with a still better one on the 3,000 ft. height of the interior. Good harbours, fertile soils, combined with the possibilities of rich minerals—all go to make an attractive field for the pioneer and ambitious youth straining at the leash for opportunities to make a name. But first—the Government must do their share and uphold the laws of a civilised race.

## EPILOGUE TO HATE.

BY NELL HANSON.

THE night Mick O'Callaghan died was wet and wild. And that seemed fitting to the young priest, for he died unshriven, cursing Bride, his wife.

It was late, and his housekeeper had gone to bed, when Bride came knocking at the young priest's door. She had no coat or shawl, and her bright hair streamed out upon the wind. Her face was white and her dark eyes afraid.

He drew her into the narrow hall; but he did not dare to close the door against the wind and rain. Gossip was all too busy with Bride O'Callaghan; and, for all his liking of her, the young priest had to remember that.

'Is it Mick?' he asked eagerly.

He was tired, for the election meeting had been crowded and he was hoarse with shouting for Willie Redmond's supporter. But he would have walked ten miles to hear Mick O'Callaghan's confession and send him forth in peace.

'It is,' she panted. 'But it's too late, Father! He had his gun an' he swore he'd murder me if I brought you to him. He put a curse on me, Father—a terrible curse it was!' She pressed her hands against her wet face, shuddering. 'An' then he was still a great while, wid his eyes wide open watchin', an' me thryin' to say me prayers, Father! An' then, all at once, he died.'

Father Murphy said: 'I'm sorry!' gently; and put his hand on her shoulder. Then he crossed himself. 'May God have mercy on his soul!' he muttered.

'I'm sorry. Sorry,' he said again sadly; and helped her to a chair in the hall. He went inside and brought her brandy from his cupboard. Her teeth chattered as he held the glass to her lips.

'I can't be goin' back there, Father,' she whispered.

'Are ye alone?' he asked.

'I am. The farm boys were all in terror, an' he dyin' the way he did, Father. There's no wan will dare to stay wid me at

all.' She rocked herself to and fro, holding her hands to her breast.

Father Murphy took a sudden resolution. With a bang that defied all the host of Kilbray tongues, he shut his front door.

'Wait here till I get me things,' he commanded. 'I'm comin' with ye meself.'

'God bless ye, Father, an' have mercy on us all!' the girl gasped out.

So this was the earthly end of Mick O'Callaghan's bitter spirit: this going out into the darkness unblessed by Holy Church! Father Murphy sighed as he put on his overcoat. He was still young, and recalcitrant members of his flock had been few. The state of Mick O'Callaghan's soul had troubled him for five years past. And of Bride's also, for that matter. She was a puzzle to him.

When he first came to Kilbray as parish priest, he had felt heart sorry for the girl—young, lovely, and so plainly unhappy. Who was to blame for her unhappiness he could not tell. Kilbray said Mick O'Callaghan had got her into trouble, and that she had married him with no love for him and deserved to be unhappy. Of the truth of that he could form no opinion, for Mick had brought her from Limerick about three years before he himself had been sent to Kilbray. Kilbray said poor Mick was daft about her, and that she treated him with shameful cruelty. Was lack of warm love synonymous with 'shameful cruelty,' in the mind of Kilbray, Father Murphy had wondered, studying the gentle face turned up to him Sunday by Sunday, in chapel. In a community used to marriage by barter, where so many cows and sheep were the price of most hearts, the criticism had struck him as unfair, and had driven his sympathy towards the girl. He saw that she had come to a prejudiced village, angry because the most prosperous small farmer in the neighbourhood had chosen a stranger from another county. He knew that the corn-gold of her hair and the velvet darkness of her eyes had sharpened village tongues.

But gradually he had come to realise that later gossip had some foundation. Wasn't it through Bride that they had lost Daniel Mulligan, the best schoolmaster any village could hope to have? Of that he had had indisputable evidence, for Mulligan was a good Catholic whose soul had been finally bared to his father confessor. Father Murphy knew of Bride's friendship with him; his temptation; and the subsequent coldness and scorn that sent the young

man away from Kilbray, and from Ireland itself, to America. He told Father Murphy bitterly that she had led him on most cruelly. As to that, Father Murphy had drawn his own conclusions. He knew the natural reactions of loneliness to any overture of friendship; and even his few years in the priesthood had taught him how black even white can look, when seen in bitter retrospect. But the gossips had some sound strands for their weaving, for Mulligan's infatuation had been plain for all to see.

Equally obvious had been the later infatuation of Evan Stanfield, the English agent for the Trench estate. And here Father Murphy was on less sure ground.

Stanfield was a Protestant and he saw little of him. But he had watched Bride O'Callaghan anxiously; and in the ten months that Stanfield was in Kilbray, he saw her grow paler and thinner; saw her glance grow more wild and hunted; saw them together, too, more than once, with a look on their faces that he couldn't mistake. Bride came to Mass just as regularly and made her confession as often as most. But no word of her love for Stanfield came to him through the small grid; and Father Murphy—touched unwillingly by the seeping tide of village gossip—had caught himself wondering unhappily whether a woman who withheld that much might not be withholding greater sin.

He argued with himself loyally. 'She's got the sensitiveness of a hunted creature; an' small blame to her! God knows what those devils' tongues have made her afraid of telling, even in the Holy Sacrament of Penance itself!'

But it was when Stanfield had been in Kilbray six months that Mick O'Callaghan finally defied the Church. Father Murphy had been forced to add that fact to the evidence against Bride.

He had said to Mick, very quietly: 'It's high time ye made your confession, O'Callaghan. Ye've not been to Mass even, for nearly a year.' And Mick had replied, with an equal quietness that frightened Father Murphy more than rage or blustering: 'To hell wid you an' yer Church, Father! It's a bad turn the Church done me when it married me. An' I've done wid yez now, for good an' all!'

The strange thing was that in spite of this blasphemous defiance, of which he had made no secret, Kilbray's sympathy was with Mick. 'Maybe clan spirit runs deeper than religion itself!' Father Murphy pondered, rather humbly; and set to preaching more earnestly on charity and tolerance and obedience to Holy Church.

But in spite of his earnestness, Kilbray eagerly fed the fire of Mick's suspicion and hate. Once Mick ran into young Stanfield outside 'The Silver Shannon'; and Father Murphy heard that the agent had got a bad beating-up. He was a big fellow, twice Mick's size, and known to be a good boxer; from which facts the priest had drawn certain inferences, verified many times over in the confessional.

Kilbray even went the length of boycotting the young agent, refusing to pay him their rents; until at last Mr. Trench returned from abroad, and after discreet enquiry sent Stanfield back to England and put a new man in his place.

After that, Bride seldom came into Kilbray except to Mass. She even managed to do most of her household shopping in the neighbouring town of Dunmally, on fair days. Of Evan Stanfield nothing definite was heard, though rumour declared that Mr. Trench had given him a new job, looking after his English wife's property in Devonshire. Knowing the imaginative power of the Kilbray postmistress, Father Murphy decided that no scrape of a pen could have passed between him and Bride O'Callaghan.

Mick had aged rapidly after Stanfield's departure. He spent more and more time in 'The Silver Shannon,' and never once darkened the door of the chapel. Father Murphy tried reason; persuasion; severity. Mick would listen politely, saying nothing; but the priest knew he might as well have been speaking to a corpse.

Once only Mick had interrupted his homily. 'I've spoken a curse, so I have—a curse as black as hell's night,' he said, as quietly as he had defied him before. 'An' it's not Mick O'Callaghan that'll be goin' snivelling to confession an' take it back! So ye may as well save yer breath, Father!'

They were in the farm kitchen, and Bride was standing near. Mick put his arm about her, quite gently; but the look in his eyes as he smiled down at her was not pleasant to see. Often, in the night, Father Murphy had awakened from uneasy sleep, the tone of Mick's quiet voice in his ears; and had seen again, in the darkness, the terror in Bride's eyes. Many a cold hour he had spent on his knees in the stone chapel, saying urgent prayers for the two of them, in the four years that followed. But his faith wasn't strong enough to subdue his fear. He felt he was fighting something implacable.

Bride's beauty had faded quickly, as if sponged out by some malignant hand. Only her hair retained its colour of ripened

corn. But her confessions still skimmed the surface of commonplace, venial sin. He waited in vain for the day when she would say as much as: 'God forgive me, Father—I hate my husband!' He thought: 'Mick's surely put the fear of hell on her, poor soul!'

Then, unexpectedly, news had come that Mick was dying. Appendicitis; too late for operation, the doctor told the priest. Bride promised she would send for him if she could. He spent two whole nights in the chapel and said two Masses at dawn for Mick's intention. But the only result had been Bride's wild knocking on his front door.

He held the girl by the arm, pushing her into the gale as they struggled out to the farm. The wind shrieked across the flat fields that flanked the Dunmally road and drove the heavy rain through their clothing. Beyond the fields, the Atlantic thundered against the steep cliffs, throwing up spray that salted the driving rain. It was useless to try to talk. Now and then a convulsive shuddering made Bride stagger. Once she stopped dead, clutching him by the arm and crossing herself.

'Did ye hear him laugh? Beyond! By the big thornbush!' She pointed wildly.

He did his best to soothe her. But he thought again: 'It's a wild night surely for a dark soul to pass out'; and found himself hurrying past the big thorn-bush.

Mick's bed was in the farm kitchen, by the fire. He lay as he had died, with his blue eyes staring open. Father Murphy wondered if it was his excited fancy that saw an ugly smile still twisting the thin lips. He covered him quickly with the sheet, and set to making a cup of tea for Bride.

While she drank the tea he busied himself about the bed, doing all that his Church could for the defiant soul that had passed out.

Later, sympathy linked with curiosity urging him, he said: 'Would it help you at all, Mrs. O'Callaghan, to be tellin' me the curse he put on ye, God help him? Can you remember the words he said at all?'

'Remember them, is it?'—Bride's voice was bitter—'An' he puttin' them on me every night for the past four years an' more!'

Four years! The fear of hell indeed!

'Tell me, so!' he urged gently.

She put her hands to her breast, swaying to and fro, her dark eyes fixed on the smouldering glow of the turf fire.



"I curse you, Bride O'Callaghan, that married me good house an' me fields an' me sheep an' cows, an' had no spark o' love for the man that wanted ye. I curse Holy Church that married your cold body to mine. I curse Daniel Mulligan that set his eyes on ye. I curse Evan Stanfield that wooed ye and won ye, by stealth. May ye have neither joy nor peace, all three of yez, but only sorrow unending, in this wurrid an' the next! Amen."

Breaking the stillness that followed, the wind leaped with a shriek at the house, shaking the window and beating the rain against it. She started up with a cry: 'Mick! Beyond at the window!'

Father Murphy drew the curtain and peered out into the blackness. His hand was shaking. 'There isn't annything,' he said steadily.

'Twas his laugh,' she said more calmly. 'How could I be mistakin' his laugh, Father, an' me married to him for nine long years?'

The glow from the turf lit up the haggard face and sharpened the shadows round the great dark eyes. A terrible pity stirred in the young priest. So that was her primal sin, then! She had married a house and a bit of land, as countless women of her race had done, from time immemorial!

He made her lie down at last in the inner room, with a candle burning, and spent the night on his knees beside Mick's bed.

The farm labourers were early astir, and crept to the door with frightened faces. He sent one of them to fetch his housekeeper—a sturdy woman with nerves that he could trust.

'Miss Doyle will stay wid you, Mrs. O'Callaghan, till we have Mick buried,' he said.

'Ah, hurry!' she implored him. 'Ye'll not let me be wid him long?'

Surprisingly, no one was eager to wake Mick O'Callaghan; though a few, perhaps ashamed of their cowardice and disloyalty, ventured out to the farm the following night, fortified by a lengthy call at 'The Silver Shannon.' But the wake was a sorry affair. Plainly, the way of his passing had shocked and frightened Kilbray; and Father Murphy divined that even his most enthusiastic supporters had reckoned—albeit subconsciously—on an orthodox death-bed repentance.

Penance; novenas; masses for Mick: under the priest's guidance Bride buckled on the whole armour of spiritual defence. She even

confessed her hatred at last, and received absolution. But all his troubled prayer for her and his most subtle suggestion could draw her out no further. Her love—and, for all he knew, her mortal sin—remained unconfessed.

Spring drew on, and with lengthening days and the song of birds and the peaceful murmur of blue quiet seas, the memory of that wild night was dimmed a little in the young priest's mind. True, there were tales that Mick O'Callaghan had been seen by this one and that one; that his mocking laugh had been heard on the roads at night-time. But Father Murphy paid little heed to them, for he saw the colour deepening in Bride's thin face, and the light of youth and hope creeping timidly back to her eyes. He thought: 'If there's anny truth that Mick is walkin', it's herself would be seein' him.' And he told his parishioners to get on with their business and stop talking ignorant, superstitious nonsense.

Then one day in June an excited whisper ran through the village. Bride O'Callaghan had posted a letter to Evan Stanfield; a registered letter it was. She'd posted it in Dunmally, the sly bit! How was she—a black stranger—to know that the postmistress in Dunmally was a Kilbray woman? And on the 13th, as well! It'd serve her right if it brought her ill luck, so it would!

At first Father Murphy did not know whether to be glad or sorry. His instinct was against a marriage with a Protestant. But his pity longed for happiness for Bride. In the end he decided: 'She's my firm friend, and very devout in her duties. I'm not needin' to be afraid now that she'll slip from the arms of the Church.'

July passed and August came, and no letter came for her from Evan Stanfield. That that was certain there could be no doubt, even if Bride's pale anxiety had not told the tale, for none could have passed the gimlet eyes of the two postmistresses. Father Murphy caught himself thinking: 'What possessed the girl to post it on a 13th!' Then chid himself for a superstitious fool. He made excuses to go out to the farm, hoping she might unburden her mind to him. But she only talked to him of everyday trifles, with a listlessness that wrung his heart. He half-thought of getting Stanfield's address from Mr. Trench, who was just over for the shooting, and had almost made up his mind to do so, when he ran into an excited group outside the public-house. He caught the name of Evan Stanfield, and curiosity threw dignity to the winds. He hovered on the outskirts of the crowd.

'Evan Stanfield's afther gettin' married! It was Mr. Trinch himself was tellin' Paddy O'Malley. Last week it was, only. He was at the weddin' himself. An' a power o' money she's got, they do be sayin'! What'll her high mightiness be doin' now, I wondher, an' her writin' an' beggin' him to come back to her! There's shame for ye, *moyah!*'

A whisper of 'His Riverence!' made them draw back shame-facedly. With a grave salutation he passed on, leaving them to wonder uncomfortably how much he had heard. He rode straight out to see Mr. Trench. He made no bones about his errand. 'One of my people was in love with Stanfield,' he explained bluntly.

Trench knew. Stanfield had told him, years ago. He'd never got over it, poor devil. Why he'd married the woman he had, heaven only knew. She'd got a face like the cross fairy in the pantomime! There was no explaining the queer impulses that drove men. . . . But why, in the name of all that was kind, had no one written and told him the girl was free? Father Murphy just stopped himself saying: 'She wrote herself.' That letter was Bride's own business.

He rode on sadly to the O'Callaghan farm. He would break the news himself—casually, as if it were a thing of no moment. What a short-lived memory human passion could be!

But ill news travels fast on willing air. The face that met him at the door was white and cold and still.

He said impulsively: 'I'm sorry! Indeed I am, Bride!' forgetting in his agitation that he had never called her that.

She drew back, raising a hand with a little gesture of dignity. 'Evan Stanfield is nothing to me. What's gettin' at yez all, I wondher?' she said; and turned back into the kitchen with a laugh that hurt him.

She came to Mass regularly, with her head held high and a scornful smile set frozenly on her lovely mouth. And Father Murphy watched terror creeping back to her eyes.

And then Daniel Mulligan came back to Kilbray. He arrived in the late afternoon of a day in early October. He was seen by this one and that one; but beyond a gay: 'How's yerself?' he stopped to speak to no one. He walked straight through the village, whistling and swinging a stick, and out along the Dunmally road towards the O'Callaghan farm. When she brought the young priest his supper, Miss Doyle said: 'What's brought *him* back in such fine fettle, I wondher!' and smiled the Mona Lisa smile with

which she liked to counter the secrets of the confessional. Father Murphy thought: 'I wondher if she'll have him. Hearts do queer things, an' they caught on the rebound.'

But for the second time that year there was loud, excited knocking on the priest's door, late at night. The policeman and one of the O'Callaghan labourers stood on the doorstep.

'There's bin shootin' beyond at O'Callaghan's! Herself an' Daniel Mulligan—the both o' them! Wud ye be steppin' out there wid me, yer riverence?' Importance tried to repress excitement and fear in the constable's voice. Beyond him a circle of dim faces peered—curious; malevolent; afraid.

'Get back to yer homes, the whole lot of yez, an' pray for the mercy o' God on their poor souls an' yer own!' the priest roared at them. Anger was a relief.

In the farm kitchen they lay on either side of the table. The constable examined the bodies. 'It'll be murder an' suicide agin Bride O'Callaghan, so it will,' he announced, a note of satisfaction in his voice. 'D'ye see the way the nose o' the gun is afther burnin' the bosom of her dhress, Father?'

Father Murphy didn't reply. He was staring at an open letter that lay on the table. In Bride's sloping, convent-trained writing he read:

'MY DEAR SWEET LOVE,

'He's dead this four months past. It's lonely I am with the wild sea and the cold fields and the bitter, bitter tongues. Is it soon you'll be coming alanna, to take me away? I lie in the night and wonder what your kiss will be like, me that's never known the kiss of pure shared love. Come soon, ah *soon*, to your loving  
BRIDE.'

Her letter to Evan Stanfield! The envelope lay face downward beside it, streaked with the blue registration cross. He remembered that gossip had said a registered letter. But how in the name of God did it come to be lying between Mulligan and herself? He glanced at the constable. He was still bending over Mulligan. He put out a quick hand and turned the envelope. His startled exclamation brought the constable to his side. In pencil, in uneven sprawling writing that certainly was not Bride's, it was addressed: 'Mr. Daniel Mulligan, 2197 East Bridge Street, Minneapolis, U.S.A.' The postmark was Dunmally.

She couldn't have sent two registered letters! All Kilbray

would have known. Then could the Dunmally postmistress . . . Father Murphy rejected the half-formed supposition. He knew his people. Not all the concentrated venom of Kilbray would have dared to tamper with a registered letter. Then what . . . He leaned closer, peering at the writing. In strange, uneven jerks it straggled across the envelope. 'I've never in all the wurld seen writin' the like o' that!' he whispered. He felt horror closing in on him. The words of the curse beat through his mind: 'May ye have neither joy nor peace, all three of yez, but only sorrow unending, in this wurld an' the next!' . . .

He thought he heard a malevolent laugh beside him, and rounded on the constable.

But the constable was gravely examining the postmark. "Four p.m., June thirteenth," he repeated slowly, aloud, as he made the entry laboriously in his official notebook.

Father Murphy crossed himself fearfully, realising he was in the presence of things outside his field of knowledge.

### THE STABLE.

HERE is the drowsy buzz of flies,  
The bleating of a wakeful calf,  
Grey mist without, a lantern gleam  
That shows the flying dust of chaff.

A dry chain rattling through a ring,  
The strong sweet tang of warm horse-flesh,  
The lowing of a beast that scents  
The breath of dawn—clean, cool and fresh.

The snuffle of an unweaned foal,  
Deep sleep, the smell of hay—as when  
Long since, great kings came to adore  
And in the straw there knelt wise men.

L. G. W. WHITE.

*Tarifa.*

## INKY WOOING.

BY JOHN LAMBOURNE.

[*Horace, a terrier owned by Charles Wilburton, introduces his master to Jane Whittle by means of a mêlée with her Aberdeens, Sealyhams and Pokes. Jane also owns Mogul, a prize mastiff, is the daughter of an apple-expert, and is engaged to Hubert Chipping, a writer. Charles is hardly a success with Mr. Whittle, but still decides to win Jane. To this end he takes a course in writing under Mr. George Mundon, an ex-dog-lifter from America, whose former ally, Ely Roost, yearns for Mogul. Charles goes to discuss literature with Mr. Mundon. Mr. Mundon meets Mr. Whittle and falls to temptation. He goes to stay with Mr. Whittle and talks apples. Charles struggles with his writing and decides to win Jane by recovering the stolen mastiff. But Hubert gains the credit for Mogul's restoration.*]

## CHAPTER XII.

## OF HOW LOVE CAME TO ELY ROOST.

THE failure to put Mogul to his proper uses when they had him in their possession rankled in Ely's breast. It had always been his ambition to acquire that famous mastiff. To have actually acquired him and then to have had to return him went sorely against the grain. His bitterness was directed first against the dog itself, then against the Whittle household generally. How they must have laughed when their thief-proof dog came home once more—for Ely had learnt from Mr. Mundon that the man who had paid him the reward had actually returned the dog to its mistress. Ely felt an increasing desire to get his own back. They might laugh—he pictured them, indeed, in a perpetual state of hilarity—but were they really in a position to do so? They had other dogs. The presence of the famous Mogul seemed to have blinded thieves previously to the smaller fry. But amongst the Aberdeens, Sealyhams, and especially amongst the Pokes, were specimens worth good money to anyone. Dick of Dickstone, the Sealyham, for one, would fetch a very handy sum in America. Why not lift one or two of these small creatures, and thus combine business with pleasure—for it was a pleasure to picture that imaginary smile being wiped from the faces of the Whittles.

Mr. Mundon had not yet communicated to Ely Charles's suggestion, and Ely was working entirely on his own when he returned



to Stough three days after he had left it. He arrived one afternoon in the old Ford. For he was a purposeful man and had decided to do the job that night; but first he must inspect the kennels to determine what kind of skeleton key—if any—would be needed.

His method on all these occasions was to hang about the place and find out what he wanted. If seen and questioned—as he generally was—he would either have come to the wrong house, or, preferably, enquire if they had any old clothes for sale. The presence of his car at the front gate gave the mistaken impression that he was not a loafer. If old clothes *were* available nothing was easier than to refuse them on the grounds of their being too old or too dear.

He did this at Bransby Towers; got to the kennels, inspected the lock, smiled at it, then made his way towards the front entrance. On the return he saw a head looking at him out of the kitchen window. The head was Dorothy's.

He walked up.

'I been lookin' for some'n,' he said. 'Say, have youse any ole cloes?'

'I've got an old mop,' said Dorothy, her head disappearing. 'What did you say you wanted?' the head enquired, returning to the window.

'Ole cloe.'

'Then here's one to be going on with.'

Ely reeled backward as the missile struck him with a soggy squelch. He wiped the water from his face and clothes with his handkerchief, then turned to the face in the window and made ready to speak. On his tongue was a selection of Bowery's choicest and crispest—which are choice and crisp to a degree. His mouth opened, then slowly shut without a word. He stood, stared, took the dish-cloth up, and, with the words 'This is youse wiper,' handed it back to her.

Dorothy took it, disappointed. She had looked forward eagerly to a brisk encounter; a battle of words and missiles, one of those battles a woman loves, in which she is armed and the other side is not. She did not realise at the time what the reader will have realised already by looking at the chapter heading.

Yes, in the twinkling of an eye, love had come to Ely Roost. It was not the girl's looks—though these did not displease him—so much as the dish-cloth that had wrought the miracle. This man was an outcast from his native land, and he had all the exile's

longing for his own country. What he specially missed were his friends—the Bowery boys and girls. Tough lads and lassies . . . would he ever meet their like again? He had reached the point when much more of the airs and graces and cissy politeness of English girls would have made him vomit like a cat. And here—out of the blue—had appeared one who without hesitation had flung a wet dish-cloth at him with an aim as good and hard as that of Chicago Liz or Wild-Cat Annie. His face still tingled. The thing went to his very heart.

And there was nothing cissy in that face or in that voice. He longed for her to throw something else. And he did not long in vain.

And now—for time presses—we must get back to Charles and to the meeting between himself and Ely that Mr. Mundon had arranged for the Friday.

Charles turned up well to time, but found that Ely was there before him.

‘Are you two acquainted?’ asked Mr. Mundon, superintending the formalities. ‘Mr. Wilburton, meet Mr. Roost.’

They met, each murmuring suitable responses after his kind: ‘How dew doo?’ ‘Pleester meetcher.’

‘I been talkin’ to Ely,’ said Mr. Mundon, ‘about this proposition of yourn. I can’t make out what’s come over the gink. He won’t take it on.’

Ely chewed his gum in a slow but thorough manner that would have deeply interested Horace, but said nothing.

‘He won’t do it?’ asked Charles incredulously.

‘You wouldn’t believe,’ said Mr. Mundon, ‘but that goob’s gone and fallen for a Jane. Says he ain’t stealing no dogs from Bransby Towers.’

‘But why?’

‘I tell you—he’s fell for a Jane.’

‘A Jane at Bransby Towers?’

‘Yep.’

‘Who?’

‘Search me. Who’ve you fall for, Ely?’

‘A goil.’

‘We guessed that much. What’s her name?’

‘Dorothy.’

‘Dorothy!’ echoed Charles. ‘That’s the servant.’

‘Is that the servant?’ asked Mr. Mundon, the interpreter.

'Yeh.'

'How did *he* come to meet her?' asked Charles, surprised.

'How'd you run across this dame, Ely?'

'Aw—taggin' aroun' dat way.'

'Taggin' around which way?'

'Taggin' aroun' de kennel. I figure I lift a small tyke dat night.'

'Well, that's all right. Where does the Jane come in?'

'I hang aroun' de kennel and look at de lock. Say—dat Yale can be open wid a toothpick.'

'And what then? Hell, Ely, gettin' noos from you's like fishin' currants out of dough-nuts.'

'Dis goil looks t'roo a window.'

'The servant does?'

'Yeah.'

'What did she say?'

'She don' say nod'n.'

'And you says?'

'I kids her I wants ole cloes.'

'And she says? . . . Hell, Ely, this ain't vaudeville!'

'She trows a mop.'

'Hits you?'

'Yeah.'

'Well, thank Mike for that! What the girl done then?'

'She t'row a brush, but it ain't hit me.'

'Well, she ain't treated you so darn good you can't steal a dog there.'

'I ain't stealin' no dogs from where dat Jane's at.'

'Ely—we're only asking you to lift a small one.'

'Nope.'

Mr. Mundon shrugged his shoulders and turned to Charles. 'He's got it,' he said. 'He's got it good and proper. When a fellow's on this Romeo stunt it takes him all ways. Laddie, you'll have to take that extra course in writing.'

But Charles was thinking.

'Now look here,' he said. 'I know the kennels and I know this dog, Dick of Dickstone, and what's more the dog knows me. When you've stolen a dog, Mr. Mundon, what do you do with it?'

'We got a place in the country.'

'Well then, listen. I could pinch the dog. At night. Put aniseed on my trousers, you know. And Ely here could be waiting with a car and take it to this place of yours. You could keep it

there, and a few days later I could take it back to Miss Whittle and spin a yarn.'

'Well . . . ' hesitated Mr. Mundon.

'It would be quite all right. It wouldn't hurt *you*. I've simply got to do something or she'll marry the other fellow. You see, the swine's been telling her all sorts of yarns about the way he got Mogul back for her. He's got no principles.'

Mr. Mundon turned to his friend. 'You don't mind doin' that, Ely?—just taking the dog to the depository?'

'Suppose my goil find out?'

'*Your* girl! Hell! all she wants is to get one over you with the wet end of a mop. What do you want to study *her* for?'

'I've fell for dat goil.'

'Well, go *on* falling for her. Who in heck's stoppin' you! *You're* not lifting any dogs there. This'—motioning to Charles—'is the feller's liftin' them. You're taking it to the depository.'

'Aw!'

'Now quit bucking, Ely. I lifted that Mogul when you wanted it. It's your turn now. We've done this feller in bad and we've got to see him put right. 'Sides which, if we don't help him maybe he'll let on to the cops.'

Ely chewed slowly in a very unimpressed manner.

'He'd got a dame,' urged Mr. Mundon, 'same as you. You don't want him to get sand put in his soup, do you?'

Ely visibly relented. He stopped chewing and studied the carpet. Mr. Mundon had been a shrewd judge in appealing to the lover's instinct.

'Aw, well,' said Ely at length.

'At-a-baby!' said Mr. Mundon, slapping him on the back. 'I noo you wouldn't let us down, Ely.'

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### OF HOW CHARLES TOOK TO CRIME.

AND so, with the born ease of a duckling taking to water, Charles took to crime. The motives that prompt men to embark on a criminal career are many and varied, but foremost amongst them is the love of a good woman. Charles loved a good woman, and

we see him contemplating a midnight burglary with as much composure as he would have contemplated the gift of a posy of violets had things been running more smoothly. Moreover, he would have contemplated murder with equal composure had murder been likely to advance his suit. Of such stuff are true lovers made.

Before he left Mr. Mundon's office the thing had been arranged down to the last detail. The theft was to take place the following day. At one o'clock in the morning Charles and Ely were to drive up not far from the gate of Bransby Towers. Charles was to tiptoe to the kennels, enter them by one of the skeleton keys kindly supplied by Mr. Mundon and lure the Sealyham, Dick of Dickstone, to the car with the aid of aniseed. The dogs knew him and would not, he thought, raise a particularly violent hullabaloo when he entered the kennels. In any case, the kennels were purposely situated as far as possible from the house on account of the noise. A mixed assortment of Aberdeens, Sealyhams and Pekes are never entirely silent. Were the Whittle household to investigate every outcry made at night, then the Whittle household might just as well stay up and not go to bed at all.

The scheme, to Charles, seemed watertight. Jane would grieve over the loss of Dick and would appeal to Hubert to get him back. Hubert would prove useless, but in three days he, Charles, would walk up to the house and return her her dog. Pressed to explain how he had found it he would spin some yarn. Oh yes, he would certainly spin some yarn. One was not a novelist for nothing. There is a time for modesty and a time for laying it on with a trowel. In this instance the latter course would be called for. Charles would think up such a yarn as would make Jane's hair stand on end. It would be a mixture of hairbreadth escapes and super-Sherlock cunning. If Hubert could spin a pack of lies, so could he. By Gosh, yes!

In the small hours of the morning on Saturday, the 25th of July, a closed car drew up close to the entrance of Bransby Towers. From it alighted a young man clad (amongst other things) in tennis shoes.

The house was wrapped in slumber: even from the distant kennels towards which the young man made his stealthy way there came no sound. The sedge had, as it were, wither'd from the lake, and no Peke yapped. This, however, did not last. When Charles,

after much tiptoeing and unnecessary contortions, reached the kennels and applied the skeleton key to the padlock the Pekes yapped good and hearty, as did also the Sealyhams and the Aberdeens. If they expected to rouse the house, however, they made a big mistake. They had cried 'wolf' too often for that. Equally vociferous outcries had been raised time out of number when, for instance, Sammy of Sammyville, the Sealyham, dreamt of rats or Pamela, the Peke, took the wrong bed.

But Charles did not know this, and the sweat gathered on his brow as he pushed and pulled at the padlock. Not only the house but the countryside, it seemed to him, must be awake by now. He was thinking of dropping the business altogether and cutting back to the car when the lock clicked and fell open. He detached the padlock and stepped inside. 'Hush! Blast you!' he said soothingly, and closed the door behind him.

Gradually the din subsided. 'This,' said the dogs to each other, 'is only Charles, the son of Horace.' So they gathered round him and wagged their tails.

The kennels were grouped along the walls of the enclosure. The dogs were not tied, for each dog knew its own kennel and slept in it—except when devilment prompted one or other to sleep in someone else's. Then there was a free fight. Amongst small dogs any excuse suffices to raise Cain.

With the aid of a pocket torch Charles located Dick of Dickstone and collared him. He worked quickly, for fear moved him. The recent outcry had been loud, and at any moment he expected to hear voices and the sound of approaching footsteps. He went outside the door and, kicking back the dogs, closed it, putting on the padlock. Then he put down Dick of Dickstone and drew the bottle of aniseed from his pocket. The idea was this: had Charles carried the dog to the car it would probably have begun barking in the process—and the way from the kennels to the outside gate led perilously close to the house. Therefore, it had been thought advisable by such experts as Ely and Mr. Mundon that Charles, after getting the dog out of the kennel should sprinkle aniseed on his trousers and let the animal follow him. This would ensure the dog running smoothly and silently.

The plan worked admirably. Once the aniseed had been applied Dick of Dickstone attached his nose to the lower portions of Charles's pants and kept it there. He followed him with the silence of a ghost—as also did all the other dogs. For Charles had



been hurried and nervous. He had closed the door of the kennels and slipped the padlock on and locked it, but he had omitted to put the hasp on the staple. The door, therefore, had swung slowly open, and twenty-five Aberdeens, Sealyhams and Pokes had joined Dick of Dickstone and followed Charles and the smell of aniseed in a dense, slowly moving flock.

Ely Roost, after Charles's departure into the grounds, leant back in his seat and chewed sombrely at his gum. Phlegmatic as a rule, he was nervous over this job. It was being done by an amateur. Moreover, somewhere in the back-quarters of that slumbering pile lay his beloved. That the one aim of his beloved was to get him fair and square with a wet dish-cloth made no difference. She was his 'goil'—whether she knew it or not, and it was his ambition to appear before her always as a veray parfit gentil knight. He disliked intensely being a party to pinching dogs from her house. From any other house, yes. Not from hers. Even in the simplest and most straightforward jobs hitches occur. The few times that Ely had been caught had been over jobs that had seemed dead certainties—watertight propositions. There was nothing really certain in the dog-stealing trade. It might seem easy, but there was always the possible snag. And if his Juliet ever knew—

He raised his head and frowned as a distant hullabaloo broke upon the silence of the night. That was the worst of amateurs. Noisy and slovenly. Now he or Mr. Mundon would have had Dick of Dickstone out of the kennels and into the car without any of the other dogs being any the wiser. This young doughnut might as well have hired a brass band. The noise continued, then gradually died down. Ely fished his gum from a back tooth where it had poised itself during the disturbance and resumed his methodical chewing, staring sombrely in front of him. Save for the muffled ticking of the slowly running engine complete silence reigned. Then came a step on gravel. A dim figure appeared at the gates, moving with exaggerated caution. Ely looked, stared, and started. Charles came out of the drive and behind him poured dogs, battalion after battalion.

'Suffering He-Goats!' came Ely's agonised cry. The gear grated and went home. The car shot forward. There were rapid changes of gear and a cloud of dust and Ely was gone, leaving the world to darkness and to Charles and twenty-six dogs.

The startled protest of 'Here, I say!' died on Charles's lips and

he stood staring into the darkness up the road. Growing fainter could be heard the protesting scream of an old Ford driven at Brooklands speed. It died away. Charles still stood. Then he looked round. The road was full of dogs! From somewhere, somehow, dogs innumerable had appeared. He was knee-deep in them. It took him some time to realise the truth. Events had been moving too swiftly and he was bemused. But at last it did come home to him what had happened.

Two courses were open: the first was to cut and run, the second to put the dogs back in their kennel. The first seemed the simplest and easiest. A sprint of a hundred yards, however, showed him that such was not the case. These dogs rarely got a midnight outing. No one, as a rule, ever took them out after it was dark; certainly never anyone smelling as divinely as this fellow. They jumped and frolicked with him as he ran. He stopped and turned. He had decided on the second course.

A new actor now appears on the scene. He strolls, as it were, casually and unknowingly on to the stage. He finds himself, to his immense surprise, taking the leading part; the eye of all beholders. He cuts and runs. By day, Smee, the gardener's cat, led a harassed existence. Twenty-six dogs looked on it as a reproach to their doghood that he still existed. By night things were different. A confirmed home cat during daylight hours, when darkness fell Smee walked abroad. On this occasion, after completing a second supper off a young rabbit, he shook his front paw twice, and stepped into the road. He had a date with Mona, the farmer's cat across the way. Women and song were in his mind; anything but dogs. He had crossed that road at night on similar errands a hundred times before and found it empty. The hundred and first time was the exception. He stepped into the middle of a pack of dogs. There was a silent, motionless tableau for a full second, so completely were both parties taken by surprise. Then with a hiss and a screech Smee shot off.

The dogs had never before had *any* cat—let alone the much-desired Smee—step straight into them, and they were not indifferent to the heaven-sent opportunity.

One hysterical dog can kick up quite enough din; twenty-six can wake the dead. They yelped and screamed and rushed madly in all directions. Charles gasped and ran. Five of the dogs followed him, jumping up and hanging on to his coat under the impression for the moment that he was Smee, the cat. He stopped

to shake them off. A figure sprang from a side gate and grappled. Charles flung him off and ran again. Another figure appeared and put out a leg. Charles made a pretty dive through an imaginary hoop and fell face foremost. The two men jumped on him, hanging on to arms and legs and applying a scientific double-Nelson. There was the flashing of a torch on the road. A girl's voice and then a man's. Two figures drew near: Mr. Whittle, wearing a dressing-gown, and Jane, wearing an overcoat and a revolver.

'Wh-what is all this?' asked Mr. Whittle of the gardener and chauffeur as they sat—not uncomfortably—on Charles's back.

'The thief, sir. The dog-thief.'

'Well,' said Jane, 'thank heaven we've got one of them at last!'

'What is that thing you're carrying?' asked Mr. Whittle peevishly.

'A revolver, father.'

'I will not have you going about with revolvers, Jane. Is it loaded?'

'I don't know, father.'

'Then stop waving it about.'

'All right, father.' She flashed the lamp at the prostrate figure.

'Put him on his feet, Dale,' she ordered, 'and let's have a look at him.'

Again the torch flashed. A cry like that of the wounded leveret or hare came from her, the torch fell to the ground, the revolver fluttered agitatedly, describing curves and circles.

'Go and put that thing in the house immediately!' shouted Mr. Whittle as the dancing muzzle of the revolver covered him.

The girl said nothing, and went inside the gates.

'And now,' pursued Mr. Whittle to his two servants, 'bring the thief into the house while we ring for the police. It is cold here, cold.'

In the dining-room Charles stood confronted by his captors. The dogs had been returned to the kennels. Smee had descended from the high elm and was already picking his way carefully to Mona's. Everything was as it had been except as regards Charles, who stood a wretched prisoner, guilt written on every line of his face.

Jane returned from putting the dogs back and powdering her nose. She had completely recovered the composure that the sight of Charles had momentarily ruffled.

'My dear,' said her father fussily, 'you should be in bed. We can deal with this—er—ruffian. All that remains is to ring up the police and—er—hand him over.'

'What does he say about it, father?'

'We have not questioned him as yet.'

'Then let's question him.' She turned to Charles. 'Have you anything to say about it?'

'About what?' asked Charles. 'Being set upon by these two men? Yes, I've a lot to say about that. But it will keep. Ladies, you know.'

'What were you doing with my dogs in the middle of the road at this hour of night?'

'Is the middle of the road private?'

'Answer the question.'

'Well . . . as a matter of fact it was like this. I was walking along the road—possibly in the middle, I admit—when your dogs came along, having presumably escaped from their kennel. Fearing lest they should be lost I was turning over in my mind which was the better course: to tell you or to put them back myself. As I was thinking it over a cat became temporarily one of our party. Immediately the dogs gave chase, raising the outcry which doubtless roused you.'

Charles looked round with a certain amount of pride. There was little of the George Washington about him. From his mother's knee, if a good crisp lie could get him out of a scrape, he had been accustomed to employ it in preference to the truth. The truth he had certainly employed at times, but very sparingly. His experience, taking all in all, was that sometimes a lie worked and sometimes not. Looking around he came to the conclusion that the present was one of the times when it did not. There was a sneer on the face of Bates the gardener, a smile on that of Dale the chauffeur, Jane's eyebrows were raised, Mr. Whittle's lowered.

'And can you tell us,' Mr. Whittle asked, pointing a finger at him, 'why you were wandering about outside this house at this time of night?' He glanced at the clock. 'One-twenty-five! Can you tell us also how the dogs could have escaped from a locked kennel?'

'Perhaps,' said Charles, 'someone forgot to lock it.'

'I see. And why were you hanging about outside so late?'

Charles looked at Jane. 'I've done it before,' he said.

Jane blushed, and a different, harder look came into her eyes.

For the last few minutes Mr. Whittle had been sniffing and wrinkling his nose up and down in the manner of an aged rabbit. Now he looked sternly at the gardener. 'Someone,' he said, 'is sucking a revolting type of confection. I can smell it.'

'What you smell, sir,' said Dale, 'is aniseed.'

'Indeed. And who——?'

'This bloke, sir.' Dale pointed at Charles, then bent and sniffed. 'He's got it on his trousers, sir.'

'And why——?'

'Surely you remember, father,' said Jane. 'Dog thieves use aniseed to decoy the dogs.'

'In that case,' said Mr. Whittle, 'we need delay this painful scene no longer. You, sir,' he added to Charles, 'can save further explanation for the police, to whom I am about to telephone.'

He moved towards the door.

'Father,' said Jane.

He turned.

'Don't ring up the police.'

'Most certainly I shall.'

'No, father, you mustn't. Not yet at any rate.'

'My dear girl! You yourself have always complained about the increasing number and activity of dog-thieves. You yourself have always said that, had you the power, punishment of a very drastic nature should be meted out to them.'

'I know.'

'Well, then?'

'Not in this case, father. Don't you remember this man?'

Mr. Whittle stared at Charles.

'Now you call my attention to it,' he said, 'the face has all the time seemed familiar.'

'It's Mr. Wilburton.'

'The man you picked up in the road and brought to the house?'

'Yes.'

'In that case his punishment should be the sterner. He has abused your foolish and misdirected kindness. He saw the dogs when he was here, spied out the land, and made his plans to steal them.'

'I think it was a sudden temptation, father. His methods are so crude. I don't think he can be used to it.'

'That is no excuse.'

'In any case, I think we'd better wait until to-morrow morning. It's late, and we don't want the police messing about now, do we? We can lock the man up and send for them to-morrow.'

Mr. Whittle considered. 'There is much to be said for that course,' he admitted. 'We have been robbed of sufficient sleep as it is, and the dilatory methods of the police are only too green in our memory.'

'Then we'll lock him in here.'

'What about the window?' asked the chauffeur.

'I'll keep a watch outside of that if so be I may?' said Bates vindictively. 'And I'll have a bagging-hook handy.'

'An excellent idea. And now we will endeavour to resume our interrupted rest.'

Left to himself, Charles sank into a chair. This was a nightmare. All was over. At twenty-three he was a disgraced man—a felon, waiting for the policeman to march him to gaol. And all through the most harmless and innocent action possible. If he had only locked the kennel properly he would be fifty miles away by now; the love and gratitude of Jane would be within his reach, a life of happiness would be open before him. As it was, all the future held in store was a close hair-cut.

If he had only locked the kennel properly! If Ely had only kept his head! If only that cat— Yes, if only that cat—!

And on one occasion he had dissuaded a small boy from tying a lighted squib to the tail of a cat. Bitterly now did he regret that action. Such boys should be encouraged. They should be patted on the head and given half-crowns to buy squibs with. They should be let off school so that they might pursue their beneficent course unchecked. They should be fostered, encouraged, and when in due course they arrived at manhood's estate they should be encouraged to marry and have children—shoals of them, all supplied by the State with pocket money for squibs and string.

Charles's mind went forward and he pictured a Utopia in this land of ours: a Utopia where any cat not travelling at sixty miles an hour and hauling its rolling-stock of lighted squibs was a rarity, a phenomenon about which Lieutenant-Colonels wrote letters to the *Field*.

The key clicked and the door opened. Jane entered and closed the door behind her.

'I've sent Bates to bed,' she said. 'So you can go. Wait



till I've got upstairs, then go quietly out. Put out the light. The front door's only on a latch.'

'But, Jane——'

'My name is Miss Whittle. Go out very quietly. I don't want father to hear.'

'Look here, Jane. You've got to hear about this. I——'

Jane put up her hand. 'I don't want to hear anything. The facts speak for themselves.'

'But, Jane——'

'Don't trouble to invent anything more. It's really not worth while. I'm letting you go and that's the end of it. There's no need to make excuses.'

'Jane, I *did* try to steal your dog. I tried to steal Dick of Dickstone. I was going to give it back to you. I was desperate because Hubert had got Mogul back for you and my number seemed to be up. I'd have done worse than that to get things back on the old footing.'

Jane heaved a sigh. It seemed almost a sigh of relief. Her face softened for a moment, then hardened, hardened deliberately. A contemptuous smile came to her lips.

'A likely story!' she said.

'You don't believe it?'

She laughed. 'Of course I don't. Especially after your tale about nearly finding Mogul—and other yarns.'

'I did nearly find Mogul.'

'Who had it?'

'I can't tell you.'

She laughed again—a silvery, little, beastly laugh.

'I suppose,' said Charles, 'you think I took Mogul, too?'

'Oh no, I don't. I know quite well you didn't. You couldn't. The man that would try to steal twenty-six dogs the way you did and get caught with them all in the middle of the road a few yards from the house is—well——!'

'Do you suppose I tried to steal them all?'

'I know you did.'

'Then why are you letting me go?'

'You ought to be grateful—instead of asking why.'

'Ought I! Then thanks very much. But if, as you say, I tried to steal those dogs you've no *right* to let me go. Think of the other owners when they hear that Charles the Dog Jumper is at large again.'

'I should never do what I am doing,' she said primly, 'if I thought you could ever really steal a dog. But your methods are so crude that I don't think it matters. In fact, it's rather ludicrous. This last attempt of yours! I expect Hubert and I will have many laughs over it in the long winter evenings.'

'Will you? Then I'm thankful something's going to make Hubert laugh.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean I haven't seen him laugh yet. Be careful it doesn't strain him.'

'You had better go, Mr. Wilburton, before anyone comes down.'

'Right—I will,' he said, rising.

'And I hope this will be a lesson to you,' she added spitefully. 'Perhaps I'm being too lenient, but I think it was a sudden temptation, and I don't want to ruin your life, however worthless it may be.'

Charles gasped. Words failed him at this colossal cheek, and when they came she had gone. He went out of the room, undid the catch of the front door, and stepped into the night—a broken man.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *OF THE FICKLENESS OF WOMEN.*

The way of a man with a maid is supposed to be good. There is said to be something rather special about it. The wonder of it lies, we gather, in the way a man turns an ordinary healthy girl, capable of climbing brick walls or sloshing young brothers across the ears with considerable force (as we ourselves unhappily can testify) into a morbid wreck full of womanly sweetness. Hubert Chipping had an opportunity of doing his stuff such as falls to few men. The girl practically asked for it. The affairs of Mogul and of Dick of Dickstone had come at a very critical time. They had been as beams of light shining in the darkness, exposing the worthlessness of Charles on the one hand and the soundness of Hubert on the other. All her doubts had been swept away. Hubert was the man tried in the furnace and found worthy. At every spot he had rung true. It was up to him now to get on with the job. She

wanted to learn exactly what it was about the way of a man on which Sacred Script comments so enthusiastically. 'Be wonderful,' she as good as said.

For two months they saw each other daily. They walked together and occasionally talked together. But at the end of this period Jane came to the conclusion that the way of a man with a maid was an overrated thing. Hubert's way consisted chiefly of sniffing, and of moving his eyebrows up and down in a worried manner. There was nothing wonderful about this. There was, on the contrary, something so extremely exasperating that on more than one occasion the way of a maid with a man had threatened to take the form of a brick or some blunt instrument.

At the end of two months she even found herself thinking regretfully of Charles and wishing he had not gone wrong. Charles was a dastard, a thief, a ruffian, a liar, a braggart, and a fool; but at least he did not sniff, neither did he move his eyebrows up or down. Naturally, as soon as the thought came she put it from her. Hubert was so clever. She clung to that. And he was so dependable. She clung to that too. Not only did he write books, but he was clever in other ways. The affair of Mogul had proved it.

And then, one morning, as they took a walk, after a particularly long sniff on the part of Hubert, came a sudden doubt. *Had* he been so bally clever about Mogul? Come to think of it, he had only *found* the dog wandering about. He'd tracked it down, of course . . . or said he had.

Once this train of thought had set in it went on. Pretty queer, that . . . finding Mogul wandering about. Pretty queer that thieves should allow a valuable dog to roam at large after going to the trouble of stealing it. Especially when there was a reward for its return. If they couldn't dispose of it why had they not tried for the reward?

Queer. In fact, verging on the fishy.

'Darling,' said Hubert, breaking in on her thoughts, 'we've been engaged now for a long time. And for the last two months we've been together a great deal. We've got to know each other. Don't you think . . . I mean, don't you think it's about time we—er—well, married, you know? You see—'

'Darling,' said Jane, 'we must wait a bit.' She paused. 'Er . . . Hubert?'

'Yes, dear?'

'You know—you remember Mogul, don't you?'

Hubert raised his eyebrows and then sank them. 'Mogul?'

'Yes, Mogul. Darling, don't always repeat my words. Just say "yes" if you remember him and "no" if you don't.'

'Of course I remember him. Didn't I recover him? And . . . you know, talking about that rather reminds me. You see, sweetest, you more or less promised if I got Mogul back for you to—well, you know, marry quite soon.'

'Did I?'

'Yes.'

'You were awfully clever getting him back . . . you *were* clever, weren't you, Hubert?'

'Well, dear, it's not exactly for me—what I mean is, of course. Naturally I'd go to a lot of trouble for you, dear.'

'You used your brain, didn't you?'

'Well . . . I naturally, as you might say, used my—well, my brain, yes.'

'Where did you find Mogul?'

'Need we talk about it, precious? It's all over now, and I'm sure the subject must be a painful one to you—even—*even now*.'

'No, Hubert, it's not a bit painful. In fact, I like talking about it. I want to talk about it quite a lot. It must be as good as a Sherlock Holmes tale. It was wonderful the quiet way you came back with it.'

Hubert looked away, sniffed, and moved his eyebrows rapidly. 'It was nothing, dear,' he murmured. 'After all, I only found it wandering about.'

'Where exactly was it wandering about? You've never told me that, you know. You've always rather avoided the subject. It's your modesty, I expect.'

'It was some distance from here, love. It *does* sound rather like blowing my own trumpet to talk about it. I was only too glad to get the dog back for you. What is that bird on the tree there?'

'A sparrow. But I want to know where *exactly* it was.'

'On the fourth branch from the top.'

'No, I mean Mogul.'

'Oh, Mogul! I see . . . Mogul . . . It was in no particular place. I mean—there was no town there . . . nor even village—to speak of. I always think the view here superb, don't you?'

'Oh, lovely! Was it near where the gang lived?'

'It was charming there, too.'

'No—the place where you found Mogul—was that near where the gang lived?'

'The gang. Oh yes, yes. Near where the gang lived. At least, fairly near.'

'How far?'

'One mile.'

'Exactly?'

'Yes. Or possibly two . . . or even three.'

'So you know exactly where the gang lives?'

'Well, I have an idea. Just a vague idea. You know, the vaguest idea.'

'I see.'

'I love the smell of hay, don't you?'

'Yes. But then it doesn't give me hay-fever. About Mogul—'

'It doesn't give me hay-fever either.'

'No, of course. You sniff when there's no hay. About Mogul—'

'Sniff?'

'Yes, darling. About Mogul—'

'Don't you think we'd better turn back?'

'If you want. About Mogul—'

'Then we'll turn now, shall we?'

They turned.

'About Mogul. Was where you found him far from here? I'd like to go and see the place. Perhaps we could discover where the gang lives.'

'It's a long way from here.'

'A very long way?'

'Oh frightfully!'

'And you walked him home?'

'Yes . . . Well—'

'You *said* you walked him home at first, Hubert.'

'Yes . . . Of course I walked him home.'

'He goes very slowly, doesn't he?'

'Oh, hellish slow! . . . At *times*, that is,' he added hastily. 'Sometimes, of course, he goes quite fast.'

'Never with me.'

'No? Never with you! Really! . . . Fancy!'

'To continue about this place—'

'Darling, I must hurry off. I have a chapter I want to finish

this morning. If I take this path here it will save me time. I'd love to stay and chat over things. But you know how it is.'

And Hubert sniffed, wagged his eyebrows, and bolted like a rabbit.

Jane walked slowly home.

Fishy.

And yet, what else *could* have happened? Hubert *had* brought Mogul back. He must have got hold of him in some way. He must have tracked him down somehow. But— Fishy. He had run off so quickly, too. To finish a chapter. One book and two articles. Nothing since.

She rang him up when she got home.

'Helloh!'

'Helloh!'

'Hubert, this is Jane.'

A startled bleat was the reply. Hubert felt he had had as much of Jane as he could stand for one morning.

'What was that!' asked Jane.

'Yes yes. Is that you, Jane?'

'Hubert?'

'Yes.'

'I only rang up to ask about your writing.'

'Yes. Yes yes.'

'I mean how's it going on?'

'Going on? Oh, very well. Yes.'

'Any more articles?'

'Articles? You mean—?'

'Articles, dear.'

'Oh, yes. Soon, dear. Busy writing my next novel. But I expect to publish a few articles soon. Yes yes.'

Jane grimaced at the mouth-piece. Why did the man keep on saying, 'Yes—yes yes'?

'Oh, won't that be splendid? Is your book nearly finished?'

'Yes. Nearly finished. Yes yes . . . What was that!'

'Nothing. Will it be published soon?'

'Yes, I think so. Yes, quite soon.'

'I only rang you up to ask. It's been such a long time since you did anything. And you know how I like to think you're getting on with your writing.'

'Yes yes, dear.'

'I'd simply hate to think you were dropping it.'



'Yes. Of course. Yes yes.'

'Stop it!'

'Stop what?'

'Nothing. Good-bye.'

Hubert put the receiver back and went to his room in a thoughtful mood. He sat in a chair at his small table and ruminated bitterly on the fickleness of woman. The fifteen pounds paid for Mogul had seemed at first a sound investment—good, solid, gilt-edged, trustee stock. It had seemed to clear all obstacles away. For two months Jane had eaten from his hand. Now the old difficulties were creeping back. The money looked like being a dead loss. Here was Jane once more making awkward enquiries about his writing and showing the whites of her eyes when marriage was mentioned. More dangerous still were her awkward questions about the recovery of her blasted dog. It was always so with women. Do something for them, and you got no thanks for it. Only a lot of awkward questions. The way she cross-examined him now it might have been a crime to have got her filthy animal back for her. They were all over you at first—but afterwards——! The trouble with them was you never knew when you were dug in. With a man, if you'd proved yourself once it was good enough. But a woman kept on telling you to do it again.

Badgering him once *more* about writing! And he'd done all that mortal man *could* do. He had by now one of the finest collections of rejection slips in Great Britain. The regret that he had caused to editors would, in the aggregate, have supplied sufficient tragedy for a dozen Greek plays. Not a single article taken! If he could have shown Jane *one*—just one. But no—not one.

He shook his head. Something must be done. He'd got to marry Jane. His father had been speaking to him only the other day. So had Messrs. Isaac, Paul & Kreustein. He'd have to write something. Mogul had to all intents and purposes failed. It must be another novel. He *might* just raise the money. And if it failed—!

(*To be continued.*)

## THE FAIRCHILDS AND OTHERS.

BY GERTRUDE WOODTHORPE.

It is not much more than a hundred years since books were first written in profusion specially for children. Earlier, besides the traditional fairy tales, there were grown-up books, the *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels*, for instance, which pleased a child's imagination. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, however, were born a few people who in due time began to write stories and verses which were welcomed by the children of the period. In those days, when the children of a country family were united in making their own interests, a natural taste for writing, especially a girl's taste, seems to have been often fostered in the lively mental companionship of brothers and sisters. Thoughtful people were already gathering together and teaching the poor children of their neighbourhood, and it may have been through teaching children that young women first had the idea of writing definitely for them; or schools and books may both be indications of a new kind of interest in children, which was to make great changes in education and in family life, and whose origin is not clearly seen.

Together with a fresh, individual fancy is usually, in the more successful of these early writers of children's books, a clear religious and moral purpose. Fancy and moral teaching may alternate rather oddly, as in *The Fairchild Family*, or grow together, as in the books of Mary Howitt. Warm family feeling, which first encouraged the habit of writing, often continued until the end of life, and it is not astonishing that people who, as girls, began to write for the entertainment of children, should in extreme old age write their own reminiscences, very charmingly, for their own children. Such autobiographies are interesting because of many curious details of the life of the period, and also because each is the record of a remarkable personality and describes one child's life, remembered after three-quarters of a century, from within. Ann Taylor's reminiscences are fresh and fragrant, and in Mrs. Sherwood's account of her own life, in England and India, her powers of descriptive narrative have their one real opportunity. Mary Martha Sherwood was born in 1775, Ann Taylor in 1782. Mary Howitt, who was

born in 1799, and lived until 1888, has a more modern standpoint which, although her autobiography is less intimate and free than those of the other two, makes her memories of her unusual childhood of great interest to herself and others.

Because each of these three writers, eminently popular in their own time, had earnestness of intention united with a lively mind, their grandmotherly autobiographies are of value in considering the period, the children for whom a special literature was produced, and the feeling towards children which influenced these new books.

One other writer, whose 'memorials' were published by her brother after her death, is not to be neglected, for Ann Taylor must not be separated from her sister Jane.

'And now, my dear children,' Ann begins her autobiography, 'I am not about to enter the confessional. Such of my faults as you may not have discovered, may as well remain in what obscurity they can. . . . Many you know—I wish you did not; forgive and forget them as soon as you are able, though doubtless your training has suffered more or less from some.'

In those days, it appears, there was a creature known as 'the humoured child,' and that is exactly what Ann and Jane Taylor had not been. Ann would have been ashamed to let a humoured child of her own appear at her parents' table.

Not that Ann and Jane Taylor were brought up with severity. Their father, for economy's sake, had taken his engraving and his family to the Suffolk village of Lavenham. There was no nursery, nor was there ever more than one servant, who in those days would be fully occupied with the rough work, so the children, constantly with their parents, adapted themselves and were companionable. There was no painful formative discipline like that of their mother's childhood, when her father once threw a new and favourite toy on the fire to teach her self-control. 'Nancy and Jenny' were general favourites, and the family was welcome in every cottage and house without social distinction. At their friend's the baker's, small Jenny, to her parents' disapproval, used to be stood on the kneading-board in the shop, to preach or sing or tell stories to any audience there. However, Jane grew into the retiring one, Ann into the cheerful, capable one, though both alike felt the sadness which used often to oppress good and religious natures believing themselves still separate from the abundance of divine grace.

As they grew up, their father taught them engraving so that they would have a means of livelihood. It was not for his own advantage. He paid them wages for their work and made no deduction for their board. Alternately, week by week, they were in their father's studio or helped their mother in the house. They did all the needlework too, yet found time for writing by putting off supper until half-past nine, since work in the studio went on until after eight. Ann probably never had an idle moment in her whole life.

Jane was dreamier. She wrote to a friend: 'I have sometimes lived so much in a *castle* as almost to forget that I lived in a house.' Ann's castles, before she was twelve years old, were very definite. There was Bob Nunn, a journeyman carpenter, 'ugliest, dirtiest and most forlorn,' whose misery sprang 'from an indolent, ragged, offensive dawdle of a wife. . . . The desolate condition of this poor man laid the first stone, as far as I can remember, of those aerial edifices' where she took him in hand and 'in some way ridding him of his female encumbrance . . . made a new man of him.' She suitably dressed the too large family of Billy Joskin, the hand-weaver, 'being greatly indebted for the colours of the little frocks required to the diligent study of the patchwork quilt under which I slept—or should have slept, when these perplexing cares sometimes engaged me,' and installed them in a pretty house on the common which her imagination had repaired and whitewashed.

In the days of apprenticeship there were excursions and alarms, especially when the family inhabited the garrison town of Colchester, for 'England was beginning to look thoughtful at the name of Bonaparte.' Once there was even flight for Jane and the little ones, crowded into wagons among soldiers' wives.

It was pleasant in their father's studio, for his mind was interested in every kind of knowledge and he had the gift of interesting others. 'His heart was love, his life a holiday.' Each of the family had, besides, that first requisite for writing, 'a room of one's own,' since he wished his children to be sure of a private place for prayer and meditation. Jane coveted, and fitted up for herself, an attic lumber-room, where she could see the stars from her bed. It is not always possible to distinguish Ann from Jane in *The Hymns for Infant Minds* and other rhymes; but it was Jane who wrote 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star.' Ann has her night sky too, where the moon speaks:

'When the sun is gone, I rise  
In the very silent skies . . .  
Then the reaper goes along  
Singing forth a merry song;  
While I light the shaking leaves,  
And the yellow harvest sheaves.'

The moon was important in a charming family custom, for as the family began to scatter and the boys went out into the world, they always thought of one another when they looked at the full moon. For this purpose Mr. Taylor provided Ann with a calendar, carefully marked, on her marriage. It is in harmony with his other qualities that he could turn a garden, even a town garden, into an enchanted place, and in her last visits to her parents Ann still found them among yew arches and arbours, a perfectly contented Adam and Eve.

In 1799 Ann, by a rhymed entry, won a competition in the *Minor's Pocket Book*, and this not only began the literary career that partially released the sisters from engraving and won them fame, but also decided Ann's fate in another way. As a young girl she had refused several proposals of marriage, one, after the traditional manner, from her father's apprentice; but when she was thirty and on a visit to Ilfracombe with Jane and her brothers, she received a letter from an admirer of her verses, a Mr. Gilbert still unknown to her, minister and classical tutor at Rotherham Theological College, asking if he might call on her with a view to marriage. On the way he went to see her parents in Suffolk, and Mrs. Taylor sent a warm recommendation to Ann, saying that he was 'even fascinating.' Ann received, liked, and rejected him, but her personality had evidently not disappointed him, and he asked that this answer might not be considered final. Ann, feeling that she could not hold out against an unending siege, diplomatically surrendered within a year. She wrote to a friend:

'I do not like making courtship a defensive war. . . . It is, indeed, so easy for the sins of love to be visited by the vengeance of marriage that I should always tremble to lay up for myself such a retribution. As far as possible I would waive punctilios that have no foundation in natural feeling and delicacy, and would endeavour in a word to show (were I, I mean, in the circumstances, which it is possible I may never be), that I respected both him and myself. You, my dear, have your hands and your heart full, but of this I am persuaded, that it is more for our happiness to have them full of anything, even of toil and sorrow, than to have them empty.'

She married very happily, and now her life was filled with the duties of a minister's wife, joy in her children and distress over her servants. It was Ann's way to live in her work, engraving or the bringing up of a family, and to make it as perfect as she could. In her autobiography she advises that the mother of a family should sometimes go away without her children, as a painter stands back from a picture, and that she should sometimes shut herself in a room and describe herself aloud, 'without dwelling on her excellencies.' All her life she called her husband Mr. Gilbert, but her relationship with him is expressed in a poem for one of his last birthdays which, as usual, they celebrated by gathering wild crocuses.

'To the meadows, to the meadows, love, the birds are in the trees,  
And the scent of springing violets comes stealthy on the breeze,  
And the pulse of early love is warm, in the cheek and in the eye,  
And the heart is beating tunefully—it cannot tell thee why.'

Jane was delicate and introspective. As a girl she had liked her housekeeping weeks, but was oppressed by the tedious difficulties of engraving, envying the milliners' girls whose work was suited to their capacity. She liked to write in a room looking over the open country. Then she would conjure some little girl before her, entertain her until she seemed to have had enough, and say, 'Now, my love, you can go.' She was the happy companion of her brothers and perhaps even dearer to friends, of whom she had many, than the more practical Ann; but her religion brought her sorrow until, just before her death, she felt that she had received the divine grace. Years before, she had discovered an induration in her breast. It never gave her pain, and she died, at forty-one, of another malady, peacefully. 'Put me on a clean cap, and set the room to rights, for I am going,' she said, and lay still and thoughtful to the end.

Of great importance in the *Original Poems for Infant Minds* is the moral. Ann and Jane knew how children enjoy fantastically terrible happenings and distinguish story from reality at a certain place, especially when it is all in such neat verse. If Meddlesome Matty looked inside teapots and tilted kettles, the pretty box which she one day opened was of course a snuff-box, and equally of course the lid came off with a jerk, troublesome consequences for Matty and disaster for her grandmother's spectacles which she had placed on her nose. More dreadful is the fate of the chicken who, in spite of her dear mother's cautions, tried to swim like a duck.



'The ducks, I perceived, began loudly to quack  
When they saw the poor fowl floating dead on its back ;  
And by their grave gestures and looks in discoursing,  
Obedience to parents were plainly enforcing.'

Greedy Richard shows the generous quality of the time, for when Dick had spent all he had at the pastrycook's and thrown the last pie into the street with disgust, his punishment is that he had nothing left to give.

'The beggar turned with face of grief  
And look of patient unbelief.'

Those lines reveal Jane's fine observation. She always wrote with her eye on the object. She had perhaps the more poetical imagination as well, but Ann had a way with children. Ann, at eighty, could not understand what it was to feel old, or even grown-up, excepting under great pressure of sadness.

Their hymns are too much in accordance with the religious teaching of their day to be wholly acceptable for children now ; but many things they wrote have the particular charm of earnest simplicity.

'Before the bright sun rises over the hill  
In the cornfield poor Mary is seen,'

for instance, with its picture of a little gleaner on whom too much responsibility rests ; and 'Thank you, pretty cow,' and its fragrant meadow,

'Where the purple violet grows,  
Where the bubbling water flows,  
Where the grass is fresh and fine . . .'

for bubbling water is always lovely.

Although children can to this day find entertainment in the neat, fantastic world of Ann and Jane Taylor, it seems sad that they should ever have had to read the dreadful warnings and examples of *The Fairchild Family*. However, it must be remembered that these were the commonly approved way of instruction a hundred years ago. In the midst of that formidable book are very natural children, the author's own children, Emily, Lucy and Henry. They have their surname from the extreme fairness which in India had contrasted with the bearded, blackened faces of their father and the other officers whom they ran to welcome back from

warfare in the hills. Mary Martha Sherwood was a warm-hearted and gallant woman, who has left in her autobiography a sympathetic description of herself as a girl.

‘At thirteen I had attained my full height, which is considered above the normal standard of woman. I stooped very much when thus growing. As my mother always dressed me like a child in a pinafore, I must certainly have been a very extraordinary sort of personage, and everyone cried out on seeing me as one that was to be a giantess . . . therefore never was I so happy as when I was out of sight of visitors in my own beloved woods of Stamford. In those sweet woods I had many little embowered corners, which no one knew but myself, and there, when my daily tasks were done, I used to fly with a book and enjoy myself in places where I could hear the cooing of doves, the notes of the blackbird, and the rush of two waterfalls coming from two ends of the valley and meeting within the range where I might stroll undisturbed by anyone. It must be noticed that I never made these excursions without carrying a huge wooden doll with me, which I generally slung with a string round my waist under my pinafore, as I was thought by the neighbours too big to like a doll.’

She translated fifty lines of Vergil every day, and always did her lessons standing, with a backboard fastened to her back and an iron collar pressing against her throat.

‘It only wanted one to tell me that I was hardly used to turn this healthful discipline into poison ; but there was no such person to give this hint, and hence the suspicion never, as I remember, arose in my mind that other children were not subjected to the same usage as myself. If my sister were not so, I put it down to her being so much younger, and thus I was reconciled to the difference made between us.’

Her father was a clergyman, scholarly, cordial, and happy among all sorts and conditions of men. He had been betrothed to an angelic girl called Mary, who died. Then Mary’s plain cousin, Martha, was commanded by her father to marry the bereaved lover, whose motive may have been to remain faithful always to Mary with someone who had loved her too. The firstborn was a son, for whom his mother had so much partiality that his sisters were freed from her strictness when they were his playmates. Next was Mary Martha, who became Mrs. Sherwood and author of *The Fairchild Family*. ‘But it must be borne in mind that my mother

was a near relative and beloved friend of her whose Christian name I bore ; hence the choice was alike hers as my father's.'

Her brother's amusements were vigorous. He used to put her in a drawer which he would then kick downstairs, or set her on top of piled-up chairs and tables and throw them all over, 'but being a very hardy child, and not easily hurt, I suppose I had myself to blame for some of his excesses ; for with all this he was the best of brothers to me, and I loved him very, very much.'

Through one of her friends at the dancing-class, who had it 'by heart,' which can hardly mean word for word, Mary Martha became acquainted with her first novel, Fanny Burney's *Cecilia*. That set her writing romances of her own ; and as her little sister had a kindred imagination, they acted and lived tales of Fairyland and visions of Paradise in 'the dirty environs of Kidderminster.' 'I am quite certain that even to this day, let me be where I will, I live in a sort of world of my own ; a world common to no one but myself . . . I believe that all persons have a world of imagery of their own, such being the condition of individuality.' Her father always told her that she would grow up to be a genius, and of course what her father told her must be true ; but she wondered sadly 'whether it was necessary that geniuses should be slovenly and odd' like Miss Bickerstaff in the *Tailor*. 'I would at any time in my youth rather have been a heroine of romance than a celebrated authoress.'

Her mother early assumed the habits of old age. She kept her grown-up daughters in her room, reading to her until dark, when she liked to be without candles and the two girls had to sit for hours unoccupied, far back in the room, since their mother could not bear to see people gathered round the fire. Mary Martha had thought school a kind of paradise, because there for the first time she had been allowed to sit near the fire and eat buttered toast. It is not strange that her expressions of gratitude and love to her 'dear and tender parent' are nearly always accompanied by a very gentle criticism. However, she had grown up pretty and radiantly healthy, and her father had much joy in her. She possessed an Italian greyhound, no bigger than a cat, to carry in her muff, and a perfect companion in her sister. She was popular in any available society, and had thrown her enthusiasm into the new Sunday School movement, on which many clergymen still looked with disfavour. Mary Martha said profoundly that the time had come for

everyone in the world to receive all the knowledge possible, so that they would realise afterwards how little it mattered.

Her cousin, Henry Sherwood, had a curious and neglected boyhood in France, so that he seemed hardly French or English at the time of the Revolution, which brought him not unenjoyable adventure and imprisonment. He escaped to England and entered the army. A few years after the death of her adored father, Mary Martha married this cousin, 'to follow the camp wherever the fortune of war, or rather Divine Providence, might call me.'

They went to India during the Napoleonic wars. Mary, their firstborn, eleven months and eighteen days old, had to be left in England. She could then walk a few paces alone. 'She could call Mamma, and tell me what the lambs said.' Yet Mary Martha's buoyant nature was ready for the voyage and the wonder of India. They bribed the ship's carpenter to give up his cabin, which was separated only by canvas from the place where the soldiers ate, played and slept. No discomfort of hers was to be compared with the sufferings of the men's wives. Only ten were taken, chosen by lot or selected by the ladies as servants. As the ship cast anchor, it was found that they had one too many. 'I saw the agony of the poor woman who was to be taken back to the shore. I saw her wring her hands and heard her cries . . . whatever my hardships might be, my trials were nothing to hers.' She had remarked a little earlier :

'My mind had not any room for fear of the dangers of the deep, and it is contrary to the *esprit de corps* of military persons to expatiate on these sort of alarms. I much wish that missionaries and other pious men, when writing their experiences, would refrain from expressions of fear which an officer's wife would be ashamed to utter; for I have heard these expressions much ridiculed and the enquiry made: "What is that religion which cannot give the courage which a mere man of the world might be ashamed of wanting?"'

There was one skirmish with the enemy on the way to the inexhaustible delight, as through all sorrows she found it, of India. Whatever she saw of European and native customs, nautch girls, the terrible begum whom little Lucy gravely reproved for threatening to cut out her tongue when she would not talk, and the life of the regiment, is faithfully described. She became the friend of the heroic young missionary, who had been senior wrangler, Henry Martyn, and her enthusiasm met his in joyful prospect of a Christian

India. Wherever she was stationed she gathered the children together, day by day, into a kind of school. Besides the children from the barracks there were some half-caste children, for it was then customary that an unmarried English officer should take a native wife, abandoned on his return to England and outcast of her own people because of her association with a white man.

One after another her own children died as soon as they were weaned, until she was told the secret of rearing them in India of those days, which was to give them a native foster-mother from the beginning. When there was need, she took into her home orphan children left neglected in the barracks. When, after many years in India, the Sherwoods settled down in an English country home, they still received pupils, rich and destitute alike, into their own family, and Mrs. Sherwood told them as serials, night after night, the stories that became so popular when published.

Exactly because the writer is convinced of the degradation of human nature and therefore of her own, there may be an unconscious self-righteousness betrayed in the autobiography, but more certain are the unexpected radiance and magnanimity.

Mary Howitt was brought up among Quakers and was received into the Roman Church when she was eighty-three, a year after her husband died at an even greater age. Since her autobiography was written when she was old, it may be that, retrospectively, it shows this religious orientation when she was still unaware of it. After her marriage, she led a full life of intellectual and social labour shared with her husband. She was the first translator of Hans Andersen, and herself the writer of a popular series of children's tales. One of these, *The Children's Year*, is about her two youngest children and their home at Highgate, which was country then. Herbert and Meggie sometimes invented fantastic stories, but Meggie was troubled if any grown-up person took a share in them. She felt that grown-up people should be literally truthful, but Herbert welcomed them into any make-believe. The difference is simply observed, not criticised. Meggie was timid, and this was left to the natural correction of her enjoyment of adventure with Herbert, who had no fear at all.

When Mary was a little girl herself, there had been no one to teach the children to talk. Mary and her sister Anna were forced to invent a language to use to one another. Their mother had joined the Quaker community in mature years, and both she and her husband were absorbed in spiritual things. Anna, at four,

was sent to a dame school where she at last began to learn English. She taught Mary, but old words of their own persisted. To sneeze was *akisham*, Roman numerals were *icklymicklydictines*. Sometimes the word *dividends*, which her father and mother spoke of together, struck painfully on Mary's hearing. She could connect it with no word she knew excepting *devil*, and it grieved her that the devil should be often mentioned by her good parents.

The children learned by heart the *Catechism and Confession of Faith*, but otherwise had no religious teaching. Their father wished to leave them free to await the inward light. Their minds spontaneously shaped themselves to the Unitarian belief.

When their father was away on business, they would sit by their mother when she was in the porch at her spinning-wheel. They drew very close to her because of the noise, for while she was spinning, and only then, she told them stories of her own early days. Otherwise they were left to servants. There was a young Rhoda who appeared decorous and trustworthy, but privately told the children blood-curdling stories, gossip, dark superstition and love-lore. At last, between the leaves of his favourite Madame Guyon, the father found hidden what is simply described as an unholy letter, in his eight-year-old Mary's handwriting. No doubt she had little understanding of what had been dictated, but her parents, who had kept Anna and Mary from mixing with other children, lest their thought should be contaminated, at once sent them to a day-school where they would be under the influence of a mistress of rare character, still requiring that they should be set apart from the other pupils. Afterwards, at boarding-schools of good repute among the Society of Friends, the graceful simplicity with which the others were dressed was too worldly for their father. Anna and Mary were distinguished by brown cloth pelisses without pleat or fold, and hats made on special blocks in order to be plain enough, the strings put out of sight inside the brim. The other girls brought their fancy-work, Anna and Mary shirts to make for their father in their leisure moments; but the two sisters could do anything they once saw done, and Mary never forgot her admiration of her own first effort at art, diamonds woven into strips of gold paper on a black ground. In those days Croydon was a place of stately villas and gardens. Mary's feeling for beauty had revelled in the forests and hills of Staffordshire. Now she was filled with a new, undefined longing, for an achieved fullness of life and thought, liberality, culture.



At home again in Uttoxeter they persuaded their father to let them choose their own studies without a teacher, though they did not tell him that the young man he had first engaged made love to them. They gathered together a school for poor children. As for art, they did what they could. They etched in glass and took impressions of Wedgwood designs. There was a new mortification now, the wearing of a cap, not the fashionable cap of the other young Quakeresses, 'which stood apart in an airy balloon-shape above the little head, with its turned-up hair, which was seen within it, like a bird in its cage,' but a cap uncompromising, close-fitting, in fact, a nightcap. Both girls had a gift for dressmaking, and since for themselves they must keep to one dull pattern, they invented ball dresses for their one friend who was of the world. In this they took the delight of unselfish natures, yet it was not without a pang that they saw their handiwork go off without them to the dance.

When Mary was nineteen they welcomed a companion with whom they could take longer rambles than were usual for girls alone. William Howitt was a distant connection who had come to visit relatives at Uttoxeter. They showed him where they had gathered fritillaries in the spring.

'It is nearly sixty-seven years since that walk, which comes back to me with such fresh, fragment memories as I write. Thanks be to the blessed Lord, the great Botanist, for the simple, natural tastes which he had given me! It was the first link in the golden chain of His providence which united my life with that of one of the best and purest of men.'

After their marriage, William and Mary departed from the severer puritanical customs of their upbringing, but kept the devotional spirit. As they went with the liberal stream of reform, it is natural that they should have trust in child nature. Their books for children have not the blots of Mrs. Sherwood's. Both wrote verses, not considering that they had any special gift, but recognising poetry as an undercurrent of their lives. William, robust in everything, wrote 'The Wind in a Frolic,' Mary wrote 'Buttercups and Daisies.' Mary's deeper wisdom is heard in 'The Sale of the Pet Lamb.'

'Hunger, and cold, and weariness, these are a frightful three,  
But another curse there is beside that darkens poverty,  
It may not have one thing to love, how small soe'er it be.'

This is not literally true, yet the separations and loneliness caused by poverty are familiar in Wordsworth's poems, and Mary's statement at least contains some poignant truth. After their children were grown up, William and Mary passed their old age in Switzerland and Rome, and she was touched by a different feeling abroad towards the poor, a respect in the way of bestowing charity, when in England poverty was still supposed to need harshness.

By this time a whole world of adventure, and new fairy regions, were being opened to boys and girls ; but these ladies, who would soon go out of fashion, were themselves among the discoverers and adventurers. What they have written about their own childhood shows how near at heart they were to children. The three autobiographies, of which Ann Taylor's is perhaps the most enchanting, while Mrs. Sherwood's shows the freest gift of narrative, have this in common, and with all deference to parents, each writer is clearly on the child's side. This may be the *Sesame* which opened the way into children's literature, which others, once the way was opened, might enter with more lasting power.

## THE SAILING OF THE 'IVY.'

A TRUE STORY.

BY T. WOODROOFFE.

THOUGH it was not her real name, she was always referred to as the 'Old Ivy' because, in the words of the song, she 'clung to the wall.' Her life had started on a slip on the Tyne where she was built for the Italians for the Mediterranean passenger trade; at the outbreak of war she had happened to be refitting at her builder's yard, and along with many others was at once snapped up by the Admiralty. She began proudly as a 'Despatch vessel,' but was later converted into a *dépôt* ship for destroyers. They painted her outside a dirty grey—her innards were largely removed and rearranged. In place of dining-saloons and *cabins de luxe*, there were now workshops full of whirring machinery, spacious store-rooms and crowded mess-decks; passages that had once heard the gentle pit-a-pat of dainty slippered feet were now defiled by the oily boots of burly stokers. No merchant ship, whatever she may have been in her peaceful days, is improved by being converted into a man-of-war; she can never shake off a faint air of masquerading in borrowed plumes. As she lay alongside the wall at a small coaling port on the East Coast she reminded one forcibly of another war-time expedient—of those elderly gentlemen, full of ardour, who enlisted for Home Defence and paraded self-consciously about with putties that always seemed to be on the point of coming down, and whose hopelessly ill-fitting tunics must have been a severe test of their patriotism.

For over a year now she had lain without moving at the same wharf, where she mothered a flotilla of destroyers—boats that ran continuously in the North Sea on the dull and uncomfortable jobs of Escort and Patrol. She did all their repairs and supplied them with stores; she paid them; did their washing; cut their hair; gave them baths and cinema shows; her ward-room was a club where the officers of the flotilla could get civilised drinks and swap lies about their last patrol. In short she generally played the part of Lady Bountiful, and as is usually the case with that unfortunate class of person, she got few thanks. As she never moved from her wharf and never accompanied her brood to sea (which would have

been quite unnecessary, if not suicidal), her good offices were always forgotten and she was rewarded only with good-natured detraction.

The hawsers securing her to the wharf were grimy with lack of use. Their confused tangle looked like the lianas in a primeval jungle that have been there since the birth of time. The stone coping of the wharf was neatly whitewashed, while thriving evergreens in old rum-tubs flanked the shore end of her officer's gangway. She was such a permanent feature of the landscape that one felt that she would soon be shown as such on Admiralty charts of the place. Life on board her ran on ordered and peaceful lines, and the Fleet Surgeon and Fleet Paymaster, as they were known in those spacious days, never missed their little gamble with the 'sticks' to decide who should pay for the first cocktail of the morning. The Captain got his golf regularly, and what with one thing and another the War was not so bad.

Early one morning one of her flock—the *Mongrel*—returned from patrol, and tied up with her stern under the *Ivy's* high overhanging counter. As Hostility Ordinary Seaman MacGillivray wiped over the paintwork on the afterpart of the *Mongrel*, whistling some plaintive Highland air to himself, he little realised that he was soon to be the cause of one of the Events of the War. Having cleaned the after-gun platform, he started on the diminutive quarter-deck, and with a master's discerning eye decided he'd still have enough left to do when 'stand easy' went to keep him gently employed until dinner, and at the same time not risk the rough edge of the tongue of that sceptical man, the Coxswain. As he wiped over the depth charges in their shutles over the stern he was quietly contented with the contentment of a cow chewing the cud; the sun warmed him pleasantly; he thought of dinner-time not too far off. He paused every now and again to gaze at the signs of life about him; tugs fussing up and down in the stream; boxes and refuse floating by; the ship's cat treading delicately among the cinders on the wharf on her way to pay a visit to her lover in the *Ivy*; at the Dockyard Policeman doing nothing in a stately and well-fed manner. He had got to the point in his meditations of wondering whether he would spend the evening at the canteen or at the pictures in the *Ivy*, and was just deciding that he'd visit both, when the quartermaster's pipe sounded shrill and urgent 'Staaand easy,' and MacGillivray snatched up his cleaning cloth with the first brisk movement he had made that day. He knew there'd be a dish of tea for him on his mess-deck if he didn't arrive last, and he

had never yet been last. The cloth caught up and he gave it a sharp tug—there was a swish, a heavy plop, and some water splashed him in the face as he goggled over the side. His rag had caught up in the releasing gear of one of the depth charges and it had gone. Its shute looked horribly naked and empty, and all he could see over the stern were some bubbles slowly coming to the surface. Never a quick mover, MacGillivray on this occasion broke all his previous records. He had seen depth charges explode, sending up a huge column of water like a lighthouse, and it dawned on him that, when this one went up, it would not be hundreds of yards astern but only a foot or so. He was brought to a sudden stop on the forecastle by the burly form of the Coxswain.

'Fer Gawd's sake! What's eatin' you, Macbeth?' asked that astonished official. 'I ain't the canteen.'

'Ah've dropped yin dep' charrge, sirr.'

'You done what?'

'Ay. A dep' charrge. Yonder over by stairn.'

The Coxswain realised that something must have happened. Not only was MacGillivray moving like a wounded rhino when he'd butted into him, but he was on deck during the stand easy. He ran aft and, sure enough, one of the depth charges was missing. He was down the ladder to the ward-room in a second and, hardly stopping to knock, pushed his head through the curtain.

'First Lootenant, sir, please,' he blurted out. 'Depth charge over the stern. One o' them 'orsetile O.D.'s just released it.'

The sub., who was also the navigator, was struggling with a mass of chart corrections that had arrived that morning; the ward-room steward was polishing up the brightwork; the First Lieutenant was stretched out in front of the stove with his feet up, deep in a magazine.

'I suppose it was set to "safe,"' he said without looking up.

The Coxswain gulped. It was one of his duties on entering harbour to set all depth charges to 'safe,' and at the same time put lashings round them in their cradles to prevent accidents like this one; he had gone round the charges, he remembered, but he had been in a hurry and had omitted to lash them. With duties that are purely mechanical and part of a routine, it is very hard to swear that they have been either done or left undone. He could not be sure. His doubt as to whether he had set them all to safe became almost a conviction that he had not.

'Well, yer see, sir, being a bit adrift like this mornin', I can't

rightly say whether they wos to safe or not. As a matter o' fact, sir, I don't think they wos. Yer see, sir——'

But the ward-room was empty. And not surprisingly so because it was situated right in the stern—in fact it was practically over that cursed charge.

'See the others to safe and then get them forrard out of it,' yelled the First Lieutenant from the quarter-deck, 'and take a sounding aft,' he added as he hurried down to his Captain.

Now depth charges *qua* weapons are simple but not precise engines of destruction. When dropped, they sink until a valve worked by the pressure of water explodes them, with disturbing results, it is hoped, to anything that may happen to be in the immediate vicinity. They can be set to go off at depths varying from 20 to 150 feet or more.

'What was she set at?' asked the Captain when he heard what had happened.

'Twenty-five feet, sir.'

'What's the depth of water here?'

'I'm just getting a sounding. Here's the Cox'n, sir.'

'Well?'

'Three and a half fathoms over the stern, sir,' reported the Coxswain.

'Twenty-one feet. Safe for the present, but the tide's rising—Get me a tide-table. Quick!' shouted the Captain. 'No. Local paper will do. It's easier than those damn tables.' He grabbed the paper and tore it open.

'Here we are. High water, Lear Bridge, eleven forty-one,' he read out, 'and it's ten thirty-five now. By God, we'll have to hurry—the damn thing will go up any time after eleven. Now—tell the Chief to get steam as soon as he can and then stand by to slip.'

And then he leant back with a roar of laughter as the full results of MacGillivray's haste suddenly dawned on him.

'The *Ivy*!' he shouted. 'Don't you see? They'll have to dig her out. I'll dash over now and warn her what's coming.'

That serene vessel was in her usual state of matutinal calm. The Fleet Surgeon and the Fleet Paymaster were just about to start on the 'other half'—they were also by this time well into their everlasting argument as to whether Jenny Lind or Nellie Farren was the more attractive woman; and, as neither of the disputants had ever seen either of the ladies in question, the argument never got much further; they might just as well have argued



as to who was the fastest bowler that ever lived. The Captain's steward was burnishing a set of golf clubs. On the upper deck a lounging throng in overalls were employing their time during the stand easy sucking Woodbines; a few Troglodytes—those pale-faced folk who worked and seemed to live for ever in holes miles below decks—had been tempted out of their lairs for a few moments by the spring sun.

Into this peaceful atmosphere the Captain of the *Mongrel* burst with shattering effect.

'Seems in a 'urry. Stunt on mos' likely,' remarked the knowing ones among the Troglodytes, as they watched him dash up the gangway. They were right.

A few seconds after his meeting with the *Ivy's* Captain things started to happen. Bugles blared; boatswain's mates scurried round the decks piping the hands to fall in; the signal staff made frantic signals for tugs; the Town Ambulance and Fire Brigade were rung up; the Dockyard authorities warned. The War took on a more serious aspect when it got round that, if she wasn't out of it by eleven, the *Ivy* would ascend skywards.

Messmen and stewards suddenly realised that they had forgotten all their most important purchases in the market that morning and hurried to repair the omission; gangs of experts disconnected the shore telephones and electric supply and there was an ominous hush as the electric motors on board died down into silence; a hush, broken in the ward-room, by the indignant protests of the two controversialists when they found that the pantry bell would not work. Gangways were hauled up and parties started clearing some of the undergrowth of the *Ivy's* hawsers; and wires which had lain undisturbed for months seemed to show their resentment by whipping this way and that out of the inexperienced hands of her crew.

Tugs soon started arriving, and the Emergency Destroyer lay off. The *Mongrel* had cleared out by now and the decks of every ship in harbour were crowded by a delighted, gloating mob. It was almost believed by the irreverent, so often had they repeated the fable, that the *Ivy* couldn't move; she was firmly embedded on a foundation of empty bottles, and if she did slide off, her bottom would fall out and she would sink.

Breathlessly they watched the scene as the tugs ranged alongside and took her wires. They experienced a slight pang of disillusionment as she slowly moved away from the wharf and still floated, but a terrific cheer went up as she moved farther away

and disclosed the empty jetty—empty except for the two small trees which had been left behind in the confusion and seemed to accentuate its bareness. The wit, never absent on these occasions, got his laugh by a cry of,

'Coo. She's left her blurry garden be'ind.'

Ashore, a cordon had been drawn up to keep unsuspecting persons from the wharf. It was at this moment that the chief Quartermaster of the *Ivy* earned that reputation for impetuous bravery which to this day provides him with free pints. Returning from shore leave he was horrified to see nothing left of his floating home but the two shrubs, which, together with gangways and fresh-water tanks, were under his charge. These two bushes were his especial pride and joy, and he spent most of his leisure time in working hours painting the tubs, watering and dusting the leaves, and looking with a fierce and hopeful eye for weeds. When he heard what was happening, he broke through the cordon and, heedless of bellowed orders to come out of it, you — fool, dragged his embryo forest to a place of comparative safety. As told to-day in the parlour of the 'Green Man' the tale is one of stirring heroism of the genus 'How we saved the Guns.'

Behind the cordon the ambulance and Fire Brigade were drawn up. No one quite knew what the latter were for as the infernal depth charge was already covered by too much water. Behind these again and well in the rear were high officials gazing earnestly at their watches.

Boom. Boom. The Town Hall clock broke the silence as it chimed the fatal hour. Everyone held his breath. The seconds ticked on. Lungs were near bursting-point and nothing happened. The *Ivy* was in midstream, her side black with people having a last look at her old resting-place. Still nothing happened. Conversation started haltingly as the seconds turned into minutes. The Fire Brigade and ambulance turned round and got ready to go. Some of the higher officials started slowly for their offices. Half an hour went by and still nothing happened.

At noon, the *Ivy* settled matters by sounding off 'cooks' and everybody went to dinner.

That evening, at low water, a diver went down and retrieved the cause of all the trouble. It was gingerly removed to an isolated shed and examined by a band of intrepid experts. They found it still set to 'safe.'

There was always a decided coolness between the Ivys and the

Mongrels after that. Her coxswain was treated with suspicion, treatment that he passed on with interest to MacGillivray. Though there was nothing to connect that gentleman with Helen of Troy, his position became somewhat similar to what hers doubtless became in her native town. Just as nautically minded citizens of her day must have nudged one another as they passed her in the street and said 'Yes! That's her. She's the one that launched all those ships,' so MacGillivray was for ever after admiringly pointed out in the canteen as the 'bloke wot sent the old *Ivy* to sea.'

*PRIVATE ROBB OF THE TRANSPORT.*

He was born on his father's farm in the Neuk o' Fife;  
Winter and summer there, with his elder brothers  
He's driven his father's horses all his life;  
But now he drives another's.

Since ever he left the school he's wrought on the land,  
Reaper and plough, his brothers and he together,  
Strong of arm, and ruddy of skin, and tanned  
With the vigour of wind and weather.

Now whether his father died or the farm was sold,  
Or whether he loved a lass that proved unwilling,  
However the story ran, it was never told  
How he came to take the shilling.

He could not handle his arms and he could not drill;  
The sorriest gowk was a Grenadier beside him;  
And we thought to send him back to the plough, until  
In the transport lines we tried him.

There he stays, and thrives, and works like a black,  
And whistles blithe as a lad from dawn to gloaming;  
I heard 'The Boatie Rows' but a minute back  
As he bent to his curry-combing.

His horse is sleek and fit, and his leather shines,  
And the rest of his army days he's like to spend there,  
For he's found a Neuk o' Fife in the transport lines,  
And a horse to be his friend there.

BERNARD FERGUSON.

## THE LOCAL SITUATION.

BY HAMILTON FYFE.

I **OFTEN** think about Dilmura. It is agreeable in these days to think about a place where everyone was well off, and didn't mind admitting it—rather bucked about it, in fact. A sunshiny, prosperous, well-satisfied town was Dilmura when I stayed there—for some reason I now forget.

Perhaps to see the agricultural show; perhaps someone in Sydney had told me it was a good example of a New South Wales township in the back blocks. Anyway I went, and I enjoyed my visit. I dare say, if it hadn't been Show week, I might have found little enough to do or look at. As it was Show week, and people had come in from hundreds of miles round, and all sorts of diversions were provided for them, I had no end of a time.

I suppose you would call an exhibition of pictures a diversion. The works of the local amateurs of Dilmura certainly diverted me. It seemed to show a pathetic attachment to culture that in this region of farmers, all making money and all (if one could judge by their talk) absorbed in fat cattle and wheat crops, there should be this show of painting every year, with a good deal of money allotted for prizes. It was a hang-over, I suppose, from some earlier period when 'freehand drawing' and painting in water-colours were necessary elements in the education of 'young ladies,' and when even men sometimes did a little along those lines.

Who were the artists now, I could not guess. Their technique was old-fashioned, their choice of subjects conventional. The only originality shown was in the Portrait Section. The exhibits here were supposed to be portraits from life, but, without exception, every one represented a well-known public character whom the painters could not by any possibility have seen. There was Lloyd George, there was President Wilson, there was Marshal Foch, and I wondered how the judge, an artist from Sydney, would make his awards among these.

When I left Dilmura, I shared a railway compartment with a youngish, pleasant-looking man who for some time after we started read the local weekly newspaper with strained attention. Read,

to be more accurate, one item in the local paper, which I could see was the column devoted to the Art Exhibition. Was he a contributor? Had he won a prize? Suddenly he laughed a short, sharp, rather jolly laugh. Then, his eyes still alight with fun, he looked over at me and asked me to excuse him.

'Why, of course,' I said, 'but mayn't I share the joke?'

'It's that queer little town,' he answered, with a nod of his head towards the place we had left. 'It beats cock-fighting.'

'What particular aspect of it are you thinking of?' I asked him.

'The Art Exhibition,' he returned promptly. 'I was the judge. I came up from Sydney. I'm a painter. They paid me well too,' he added, 'jolly well. I've got no complaint on that score.'

'What was the trouble, then?'

'I suppose it was really my own fault,' he admitted cheerfully. 'I took the thing too damn seriously. I didn't realise they only wanted me for window-dressing. Like a woman I met in England last year. She was engaged as historical adviser to a film company that was doing an historical film. She wrote historical novels, you see. She used to drift about the studio, but no one spoke to her. Her advice was never asked. So one day she went to the director's office and asked him what she was there for. He said he had no idea. Who was she? When she had explained, he laughed. He told her she was paid so that they could put her name on the screen and she needn't show up at the studio at all. She threw up the job. No sense of humour, I suppose. I'm quite ready to go and be judge at Dilmura again, if they want me. Next time I shall know better what to do.'

'What did you do wrong this time?' I enquired.

'I judged,' he said, looking at me with a comical expression. 'I took a lot of trouble. Made a heap of notes. Weighed one picture against another. Went over all that seemed to have any merit several times. At last I drew up my list. Oh, by the way, I cut out all the portraits—did you see them, by any chance?'

'I did,' I replied grimly.

'Life studies, eh?' he jeered. 'Well, in that class I awarded no prizes. I suggested in my report that the money allotted for portraits should be distributed in the other sections. Handed in the report day before yesterday. Secretary most polite, full of compliments. I felt quite pleased with myself. Yesterday morning I ran across a man I'd got acquainted with. Newspaper

reporter. Friendly with everyone in the place. Knows all the ropes. He catches hold of my arm. "I wanted to see you," he says. "That report of yours on the pictures. Fine piece of work. Fine! Secretary told me just now he calls it—well, fine. Only one thing it doesn't do. Doesn't take into account the local situation." He winked at me here, did Charlie (that's what everyone calls him). "Remember that play of Ibsen's?" he asked me. I didn't know what he meant. I never read any of old Ibsen's plays. Did you?"

I nodded.

'I know the one he means. Go on.'

'Well, he told me I mustn't be surprised if there were a few changes made in my awards. "Changes?" I said. "What sort of changes?" I was a bit annoyed. "Changes to suit the local situation," he said airily. Then he caught hold of my coat-lapel. "Why don't you run in and see the secretary?" he suggested. "Very nice fellow. Great admirer of yours. He'll tell you all about it." I was getting hot by this time. "All about what?" I said. I felt angry that my decisions should be altered. And I couldn't understand why. But all Charlie would do was to wink and say again, "The local situation, old man, the local situation."

'So I went at once to the secretary's office. He was the organiser for the whole show, you understand. The paintings were a side-line to him. I had to tell him who I was. He jumped up and shook hands. "That was a fine report of yours," he assured me. "Fine!" He moved some papers about as if he were looking for it. "But I hear you propose to make some changes in it," I said. "One or two," he admitted, "one or two. I'm sure you won't raise any objection." He had his eyes on me. He was sizing me up. I could see that. "That depends," I muttered, rather grimly. "Of course, my dear fellow, of course," he said. "Perhaps I'd better explain. First, about those portraits. You say they don't fulfil the conditions. They aren't from life. How do you know?" "Well," I said, "obviously they aren't." "That may be obvious," he retorted, "but I'll tell you what's obvious to me. Several of them are by exhibitors with names very well known in Dilmura—yes, and belonging to families that subscribe very handsome to the show."

I laughed. He laughed too.

'Most amusing,' I said. 'Though I dare say it didn't seem so funny to you at the time.'



'Not at first. I was pretty sore. I started to argue with him. He was very decent about it, didn't lose his temper. He took my list and went through it. I can tell you there weren't many of my awards left. He was quite frank about it. I'd given nearly all the prizes to people of no account. He arranged for them to go to the sons and daughters of the "first families." The principal prize I had allotted to someone who was serving, so he told me, in a grocer's shop. He gave it to the daughter of a very rich stock-breeder who'd sent in a horrible daub.

'He explained why. "You, as an artist, want these Art Exhibitions to go on," he said. "So do I. But unless we see that the prizes are shoved in the right direction they won't go on. You don't suppose Mr. Urquhart" (he was the rich stock-breeder) "is going to vote for their continuance if grocers' assistants carry off everything." I was so staggered by this view of it that I simply couldn't say a word. I felt as if I were in some ridiculous dream. But it was sure enough reality, and when he'd talked a lot more and shaken hands several times, I found myself outside his office and I'd come to the conclusion I'd better let him do as he liked. How could I help myself? Couldn't make any protest. Paper wouldn't print it.'

'So the local situation triumphed?'

'Yes, but look here,'—he handed me the paper. 'This is the cream of the joke. They say there has never before been such capable judging of the art exhibits and that I shall certainly be invited again next year!'

*CHIMĀNO.*

BY DENIS TOWNLEY.

CHIMĀNO's first clear recollection was of the bleak rock terraces of Arari kopje in Mashonaland and of endless caves, grottos and chimneys seemingly built expressly as a refuge for the baboon people, of the distant drums thudding from some native village: the querulous cry of the hyrax, and the wild wailing of the lemurs: the grunting of some questing bush pig, rooting in the undergrowth beneath the cliffs and sometimes the deep snarling of Nyalügwe, the leopard, the scourge and terror of the monkey tribe.

Here he encountered for the first time the members of the Arari tribe, which he was to lead within a few short years. Old tusked males, lion-like in their assured swaggering gait. Younger males, well grown, but lacking the fighting fangs and full manes of their sires. Old females, thin, rangy, ferocious and ill-tempered. Young females, many with young of Chimāno's year clinging to the long fur of their mothers' backs or playing around them. In all some hundred beasts that numbered the Arari pack.

At first Chimāno's meetings with the members of his tribe were confined to that short hour which divides day from night in the tropics. Then sometimes a big male would stalk up to him as he played beside his mother, to inspect the new-comer, only to be greeted by her bared fangs and menacing snarls.

Her solicitude for the youngster's safety seemed well founded, for a more rickety, knock-kneed, almost hairless caricature of monkeydom could hardly be imagined, although appearances are deceptive with the young of the monkey tribes, and an apparently weak and fragile infant can be dropped ten or fifteen feet on to jagged rocks and land on his feet unhurt.

Five days after his birth Chimāno, in his mother's company, or rather riding on his mother's back, made his first expedition into the outside world.

The troop did not leave Arari until the sun was riding high in the east. For that reason they seemed even more than usually suspicious of the open kloof which separated the home kopje from

the rest of the long jagged granite range of which it formed an outpost.

Even, on that first day, Chimāno's education began. His mother showed him how to turn over all the small flat rocks in search of ants' eggs, grubs, small crickets and lizards, and their eggs. How when some displaced stone revealed the flat crab-like form of *Chincomera*, the black rock scorpion, he must avoid that upward-lashing tail with its deadly sting; *Chincomera* must first be killed with a piece of wood or stone and the sting be carefully removed before being consumed. She showed him how to pull up the lush vlei grasses, the roots of which are one of the favourite foods of the baboon-folk; how, when he saw the blue of a clump of *babianas*—those delicate crocus-like blooms named by the Dutch 'Baviaantjes,' a little baboon, owing to the fondness of these animals for them—he must dig beneath them to reach the succulent bulbs below.

Just as the red ball of the sun was dipping below the jagged line of the western hills, the last member of the tribe had safely reached the craggy rock plateau at the summit of *Arari*, inaccessible to any but the rock folk, the hyrax, the mongoose, the squirrel, the lizards, and the birds. Even *Nyalūgwe* could not scale these towering cliffs; and they would have defeated the most expert mountaineer; but no cliff-face, however smooth or overhung, can turn the baboon people. Using hand and foot holds to you or me invisible, they will ascend apparently as effortlessly as a human would climb a stairway.

So safe a sanctuary had *Arari* always proved, that here, while the tribe kept to the cliffs, all vigilance was relaxed.

Here was to be the youngsters' playground. Here, Chimāno, under the watchful eye of his mother, was allowed to mingle with the young of his year.

There was only one baboon of approximately Chimāno's age (and he had been born ten days before), *Kamanta* (the fearless one), so named after his sire. Within a few minutes the pair were tumbling and chasing round the rocks and along the sheer edge of the towering cliffs.

So these two played on while the cool dusk crept swiftly over the hills, and the homing crows came winging in on their leisurely way to their rock-ledge roosts, and the night beasts emerged, still heavy with sleep, to yawn and stretch beside their lairs: until, at last, as the faint afterglow died out of the west, Chimāno and

Kamanta crept together into the communal sleeping-cave to huddle, intertwined, on the rock-ledge beside their parents through the long cold autumn night: the David and Jonathan of their world.

So the days ran into weeks, and the weeks into months.

Sometimes the troop would vary their normal diet by a raid on the native grain fields. Twice they were hunted by the incensed natives and their dogs; the second time to lose a member of the pack, a week-old baby, jolted from his mother's back and torn to pieces by the dogs, even as, despairingly she charged, roaring, to its rescue.

The leopard, too, took his toll. A spotted thunderbolt launched from a tree branch above the path. An anguished scream as those gleaming fangs closed on the vertebrae behind the head, and then silence.

As August merged into September came the first signs of spring and better times for Chimāno's people. True, the ground was dry and parched as before, and no rain-clouds flecked the blue, but from day to day the horizon became more obscured with drifting smoke haze and the clean arid tang of that smoke was on the wind. As Chimāno sat with Kamanta on their favourite look-out spur in the dusk of the lengthening evenings, they would see veld fires in four or five places every night.

When the veld fires burned within a few miles of the home kopje the tribe were always on the spot within the shortest possible time to reap a rich harvest of locusts and other insects killed, crippled, or dazed by the flames; or, if the fires happened to be in the day time, Chimāno's people were often to be seen to leeward apparently quite undisturbed by the roaring surf of flame, driving before it all living things save those which had found a refuge underground.

Arari itself was burned that year; and the tribe spent an uncomfortable night amid the billowing smoke as the flames towered and crackled in the undergrowth below them, illuminating every trunk of tree and scarp of rock and all the delicate tracery of leaf and creeper, like giant footlights beneath some Brobdingnagian stage.

In one tree only, now, was the interest of Chimāno and his people centred. That universal larder of all African animals, from Shushweri, the tiny shrew-mouse, to Njobvu, the lordly elephant. The Mahobohobo: that strange euphorbia, one of the enigmas of Africa; non-indigenous and yet spreading over vast tracts of the

continent; propagated, some say, by the elephant; probably the quickest-growing tree in all the land: ten years from seed to well-grown tree.

That year the trees bore well: every female loaded down with its myriad clumps of brownish yellow, coarse-skinned fruit, very like small Crab apples in appearance, with its oval, keeled-twin seeds, enclosed in their layer of pulp; honey sweet, yet leaving a bitter after-taste.

Chimāno and the other lighter baboons would climb into some well-laden tree, and, teetering violently on a lateral branch, shake down the riper fruit to their friends below: or sometimes, when the wind was high, they could merely stroll from tree to tree, picking the windfalls from the ground and carrying them to some shady spot to eat at leisure. Splitting the fruit open with their hands, they would lick out the sweet pulp; more often than not swallowing the stones as well. If they left the stones they were never wasted; for, after the baboons gleaned come the smaller people; Malingwere, the stripe-backed mouse, and N'dondwe, his larger cousin, who would carefully carry them away to crack the stones and consume the nutty kernels, throwing out the empty shells to accumulate in bleaching heaps before their burrows.

With the ripening of the Mahobohobos, the lean months were over; for these trees bear no quick-ripening, quick-dropping fruit, but carry a constant supply for three months or more, and into the middle of the Rains; and then, soon after they are ripe, come the Marula plums: lovely oval, purple fruit, but, to the human palate, acid and metallic. Luckily for the baboon, he seems to have been provided by Nature with a mouth and stomach quite unaffected by the very sourest fruit or berry, and with an iron constitution. It is generally believed that there are no vegetable, and few mineral, poisons that can affect him.

By mid-November Chimāno had grown into a well-built up-standing youngster, taking his share of responsibility as look-out for the troop as occasion demanded. He quarrelled little with his fellows, for he was as even tempered as Kamanta was pugnacious; yet he was respected by all, for when he did fight he wasted no time on preliminaries like most baboons, who will circle, stiff-legged, bristling and grimacing for whole minutes on end before they close, and then, when they do finally come to grips, raise the most horrible yells, grunts, snarls and howls imaginable, with nothing to show at the end of the battle but a few tufts of grey

hair scattered around the rocks. He fought silently, and, even in those early years, he fought to kill.

It was in November, too, that Chimāno had his first brush with death.

The troop were far from their usual haunts, scouring the country in search of stragglers from a swarm of brown locusts which had passed by to the west of Arari the day before, driving down wind in a cloud which had almost blotted out the late afternoon sun.

By midday they were ten miles from the home kopje in open brush country and they were caught in one of those violent but local thunderstorms that break here and there before the real Rains. The baboons hate the rain; and, when possible, take shelter from any heavy downpour; and here all the shelter visible was one rocky hill, small, but honeycombed with caves and crannies.

Eager to escape from the cold driving downpour, all thought of caution was forgotten. The whole troop galloped for the rocks.

Chimāno was one of the first to arrive. He made for the nearest sizeable cave, rushed headlong into it;—and came face to face with Nyalügwe.

As the leopard sprang, Chimāno flattened himself against the rock wall, taking a glancing blow on the shoulder which tore flesh and sinew to the bone, and Nyalügwe hurtled past, the impetus of that one leap carrying him right out of the cave and into the very centre of the main troop.

The baboons scattered on every side; but the great cat, blinded by the sudden daylight, had no thought to fight; he turned and vanished in a flash behind the rocks.

With no heed now to the pelting rain, the troop continued in headlong flight, never pausing until they reached their own familiar country; and they wasted no time in their going, leaving Chimāno to his fate.

Kamanta, only, failed to follow the rest; at his companion's cry he had headed straight for the cave; and, even when Nyalügwe burst out, he never checked his stride. The two met not far from the rocks; Chimāno, his shoulder a horrid mass of torn flesh, but still running strongly.

For nearly two miles they travelled; and Chimāno, weak from pain and loss of blood, was forced to rest at shorter and shorter intervals, until their speed had dropped to a fast walk; and ever, as they paused, they left a tell-tale trail behind them.

Kamanta knew only too well that, as they travelled, they left



that red trail behind them ; and, when the sun sank, Death—slinking, silent-footed yellow Death—would follow swiftly.

If they could make the home kopje they were safe ; but it was still far off and Chimāno was weakening visibly. As his wounds stiffened and grew cold, it was harder and harder to urge him on after each pause. When the sun sank, they had still two miles to go ; and he was so painfully weak that it was only by main force he could be dragged to his feet after each frequent rest.

The next two hours were a nightmare for Kamanta. As he struggled on in the starlight, hauling his companion over difficult boulders, himself tripping over fallen trees and loose-lying stones (for the baboons are not night-people, and can see no better than you or I in the dark), he was in a constant sweat of fear, expecting every moment to see Nyalügwe leap from behind each rock or bush ; but for all his terror he never gave up, and at last, pushing, hauling, and almost carrying his companion, made the summit of the cliffs.

Ten minutes after, came the deep cough of Nyalügwe as he crossed the gap and glided between the rocks that formed the first step of the baboons' stairway to the plateau. He was greeted by a volleying chorus of barks and roars from the cliffs. But not for a long time did his vicious snarling die away as he finally slunk off in search of easier prey.

It was well for Chimāno that his blood was the clean blood of the monkey people ; for a leopard's claws are deadly poisoned hooks ; and no wound they make, however small, is quick to heal. Within two days his shoulder was a swollen mass of suppurating flesh. It was only after ten long days of agony, stoically borne, that his system threw off the poison, and his wound began to heal ; and during all that time Kamanta hardly left his side, except when he must hunt food for them both.

When the troop came in at evening they had always some offering for the invalid : a maize cob, pilfered from the native lands and carried in, or a lizard, or scorpion from the nearer rocks ; for this is the way of the monkey tribes who, though they often seem callous in their treatment of a deposed leader who has passed his prime, will never, willingly, leave a wounded fellow when he can be saved.

After the first fortnight, Chimāno's wound healed rapidly ; but it was a long time before he regained his full strength and speed. For the rest of his life he bore Nyalügwe's brand, a wide calloused scar and a shoulder bare of hair.

So time went on, and the changing seasons passed, bringing their share of good and ill, of plenty and of hunger. Many died, and their passing was seldom peaceful; for Nature is a cruel mother, and she has no place in her scheme for the old, the weak, or the halt; and many were born to take their place.

Chimāno's father, grown old and grey in the leadership of the troop, fought his last fight to the death; and gave place to another; and Chimāno and Kamanta worked their way up, battle after battle, to seniority in the tribe. And through the long years their friendship never faltered.

The Rains failed in mid-January that year; and, by May, the horizon was dimmed with smoke. The Mahobohobos, a poor crop at the start, never ripened, but dropped, dry and half-grown, from the trees; and those which did mature had little nourishment. Even the roots and bulbs, the baboons' stand-by in times of drought, were dry and tough.

In a bad drought year all animals suffer; but the baboons, perhaps, more than most; for the eaters of flesh find it easier than at other times to make a kill; the eaters of grass can always find sustenance somewhere, however dry their fodder; and the birds, when times are lean, can migrate to other feeding grounds; but the baboons are conservative people and keep to the land and the paths that they know, whatever the cost.

For nine long months hardly a cloud had broken the monotonous blue. By the beginning of November the land was a desert, blackened and dust-covered in the shimmering heat haze, while the streams had dried entirely and the Munenga was reduced to a tiny trickling rivulet linking stagnant pools, where Katumbu, the big black otter, picked his fish at will.

Chimāno had reached his seventh year that May; a splendid, imposing beast, with his leonine mane and huge canine tusks. For three years now he had led the troop, and they had prospered under his rule, losing few of their number to Nyalūgwe and his kin.

But this was an anxious time for a leader. He himself was weak and thin from starvation; and the rest were in even worse shape—in no state to run or fight, grown reckless or careless in their hunger, and quarrelsome as well.

It was now that Nyalūgwe began to take his toll nearly every day. No longer was he the night prowler, pouncing on an unwary straggler in the dusk. When the tribe were leaving the plateau in the mornings they would often see him stretched on a ledge below

the cliffs, basking in the early morning sunlight, or find him flattened across some rock commanding the home trail when they returned early in the afternoon. When he killed now, he killed openly, and insolently, in full view of the tribe.

Yet another thing which worried Chimāno was that his long, enduring friendship with Kamanta was weakening day by day; and, should they quarrel openly, there could be but one ending; for there is only one leader of a troop of baboons. He must fight his way to that leadership; and he must fight to hold it.

It was a dull, breathless afternoon when things finally came to a head. The air was hot and lifeless and the whole long day the lightning had been playing ceaselessly in and out amongst the piled cloud-banks in the north. The troop were returning early; for, in their weakened state, they had no liking for the hazards of travel in the dusk; and they were just coming down the slope to the Arari kloof when Chimāno, who was ahead of the rest, noticed a big red-tailed lizard basking on the warm rock. He stalked it carefully from behind, moving inch by inch, intent on his prey, and was just about to pounce upon it when a large, black, hairy paw swept it from under his very nose, and he looked up to find Kamanta, mane erect and fangs bared, the lizard in his hand. In ordinary times Chimāno might have let this pass, for none of the rest of the troop had seen the affair; but, even-tempered though he was, his nerves were frayed by strain and hunger, and he saw Kamanta through a red haze of rage.

With a deep snarling grunt, which brought the troop running round the rocks, he crouched to spring at his companion, and Kamanta poised himself to meet the shock; but he never made the spring, for, on that instant, came the shrill bark of the sentinel.

Perched on a tree fork, farther along the hillside, eyes and nose alike alert for signs of danger, on an errant puff of warm wind he had sensed, wafting, through the still air, the musky taint of the carnivora; and, within a few seconds, he was down to ground with the whole tribe massed around him, silent and alert.

The wind had died away again and gave no clue where the danger lay; but by common consent, they made for the plateau, Kamanta, as always, in advance, while the rest watched from the trees.

Silently as a shadow he crossed the gap, pausing every now and then, and rising on his hind legs to peer above the bush and grass. Silently he climbed the rocks on the farther side until

he stood beneath the cliff. He turned there to give the signal for the crossing ; and, as he turned, saw a long, low, sinuous form glide round the corner of the rocks, and crouch, flat and tense, above him.

Before the sound of their warning chorus of barks had travelled across the gap, Nyalügwe had made his spring, and Kamanta lay spread-eagled. The leopard stood over him, one paw planted on his victim's neck.

Chimāno had been pacing uneasily to and fro in front of the trees, and, as Nyalügwe leaped, he started full tilt for the cliff, while behind him streamed the whole tribe. They came on up the farther slope at a gallop, bounding from rock to rock ; and the leopard, sinking flat over the writhing form of the baboon, tail lashing and yellow eyes ablaze, waited their coming.

Less than a minute from the time that Nyalügwe made his spring he was ringed in by nearly a hundred roaring, barking, slavering, hairy apes. But his back was protected by the cliff and, sitting on his haunches, one paw still planted on Kamanta's neck, the other poised, sickle-like claws protruded, making lightning darts at any who came too near. He held them at bay.

How long they would have stayed thus, and what would have been the final outcome there is no knowing, but now Nyalügwe made a mistake that was to cost him dear. A leopard's claws are retractile ; and can be drawn in or protruded at will ; and you have probably noticed a domestic cat, under the influence of pleasure or excitement, alternately protruding and retracting his claws with a sort of kneading motion. This is what Nyalügwe did ; and as the talons slid out from the paw that rested on Kamanta's neck, driving into his flesh, he gave a despairing yell of pain and terror.

This was too much for Chimāno, and, on that instant, he launched his hundred pounds of rending fury, straight at the leopard's head.

Nyalügwe drove his free paw home ; but it was not enough to turn aside the heavy weight of the baboon ; and Chimāno landed squarely on his back ; while, summoning courage at last at the sight, the others closed in, burying the leopard in a heaving, struggling, grey mass.

When they drew clear at last it would have been hard to recognise the torn, half-dismembered mess, lying below the cliff as the lithe, vital instrument of death of a few minutes before. The troop had not come off scatheless either. Kamanta was more or less unhurt ; but of the others, one lay still by the rocks, his throat slashed from ear to ear ; and many were cut and torn ; while

Chimãno had a frightful gash under the armpit and a frothy red trickle oozed from the corner of his mouth.

Painfully and slowly, that evening, Chimãno climbed to the look-out rock and sat down on his usual seat, hands clasped around his knees; and the night closed him round.

Towards midnight the storm broke at last, and through the howling of the gale that was its herald and the constant crash and peal on peal of thunder, could be heard the deep, steady roar of rain on hard-packed earth. And then it arrived; first a few wind-driven drops; then a spattering, stinging shower; and, finally, raging, breath-taking downpour, killing the wind: the note changing imperceptibly from the deep drumming of rain on hard ground to the soft hiss of water meeting water, broken by the gurgling and hollow splashing of a thousand streams and rivulets amongst the rocks.

Through it all Chimãno sat on, unmoving; and, as the downpour eased and ceased, and the moon came peering fitfully through a scudding wrack of clouds, he was silhouetted dimly on his perch; a lonely and awesome figure.

Who shall say what thoughts passed through his mind during the long night? Did he re-live again all his wild adventurous life; fight again all those battles which had brought him to leadership of the troop; smell again those two elemental smells which are the soul of Africa, the tang of the autumn smoke and the wet intoxicating scent of the first Rains; hear again the booming of the Great Ground Hornbills in the dawning; the wild harsh cry of the Bateleur Eagle; and the liquid babbling of the Red Winged Starlings round the cliffs?

We shall never know—

Towards morning, as the moon waned and the clear, cold, primrose glow of dawn grew in the east, he stretched his arms wide, sighed gently, and sank his head on his knees.

When the sun rose that day on a new, clean, rainwashed world, Kamanta came out of the sleeping-cave to climb to his accustomed seat beside his friend. Several times, during the night, he had emerged to peer at the quiet form above, but had not ventured up. Now he advanced tentatively from behind, not sure of his reception, and dropped a hand on his friend's bowed shoulder.

But Chimãno never stirred. . . .

## TWENTY FATHOM DOWN.

BY ALAN SULLIVAN.

'Not more than twenty fathom of water, an' a sandy bottom,' said MacFee earnestly, and pushed the chart across to his partner. 'Man! but it's worth trying. No insurance, I'm told, an' what we get we keep. She cleared from Broome with a parcel of pearls as big as your fist, an' they're in her safe this very day. I got this but an hour ago from a chap that was on her.'

The other man gave a shrug. 'Sharks' Bay stuff most likely.'

'No, they're from the real black-lipped shell taken off Sandy Island. I have that straight.'

'Who is this chap?'

'Name of Hickman. I'd say he drinks a bit, an' I don't altogether fancy the looks of him, but what's the use of lying in a thing like this. I'll wager he was sober enough when it happened. Murdoch—he skippered *Vespis*—had his skull smashed by a block that broke away aloft when she struck, an' he never spoke again. Not a soul but himself an' Hickman knew the combination. *Vespis* ripped her bottom out at midnight in a black gale, scraped over the reef, an' sank at once. Fifteen on her, including stokers. One boat upset, an' the sharks got that lot. Hickman was in the other. He an' the skipper were the only two that knew about the pearls, which is understandable too. They were bound for Fremantle.'

Dunham, tall, angular, with blue eyes and a skin like burned leather, laid a long finger on the chart, and pondered.

'It's a big gamble, Mac, and would take all we've got and a bit more. Where would this fellow come in?'

'A third each after paying expenses. That's fair enough. If we don't tackle it, there's plenty of others.'

'Happen he didn't give you a plan of *Vespis*?'

MacFee drew a paper from his pocket, and smoothed it out.

'Hickman made it at once: he's been on her six months. Spare cabin is aft of rear companion an' under the poop: saloon on stabbord, safe in steel locker to labbord. All easy enough at twenty fathom. No dynamiting—nothing—just walk in an' twist



the knob. Man! but it's a gift.' Here he frowned faintly, rubbing a bristly chin. 'One queer thing about it, though.'

'Only one?' The tone was a shade sardonic.

'There was a woman on board. Hickman dropped that, then seemed sorry he'd said it.'

'Her pearls, eh?'

'Not much they weren't.'

'Where is she now?'

'She jumped into the other boat when *Vespis* struck, so you can assume the rest. Nasty idea, the sharks getting her, but there's women an' women, an' you know the kind you're likely to pick up at Broome!'

'I do, but it doesn't say much for Hickman. She ought to have been in his boat,' countered Dunham, screwing up his eyes which were very sharp and bright.

'That's how it seemed to me, but I thought best to leave it alone. Anyway, what's the point in his getting us up there if the rest of it isn't straight? I'd do the diving, not him, an' what I bring up lies with me. How is he going to put anything over us?'

This argument carried weight, and presently Dunham gave a nod.

'Better have him here to-night, and we'll get something on paper. Just how far did you say from Broome?'

'Two hundred an' thirty miles sou'-west. You remember Ninety Mile Beach?'

'Don't I.'

'Well, at this end is Point Larey—there. The reef lies abreast of that, an' three miles out west-sou'-west. If there's any swell on we ought to spot it at once. Hickman says *Vespis* is squatting fair on her bottom, an' her foretopmast shouldn't be far under.' MacFee, pausing at this stage, made a gesture of decision. 'It's take it or leave it, an' I'm for taking. *Thetis* hasn't earned ten pounds in as many weeks.'

Dunham glanced out of the dingy chartroom in which they sat, and regarded *Thetis's* empty decks. Built as a North Sea trawler, she had by some turn of fortune found her way to Australia, and the two bought her rusting in Fremantle years ago. Then things went wrong, coastwise freight proved hard to get, and month after month went by with *Thetis* eating her head off. MacFee, an ex-submarine petty officer, insisted on buying a diving outfit,

and they spent two months along the Mermaid Reefs looking for shell with little luck. But there still lingered the conviction that the turn could not be far off, so they stuck to Western Australia.

A big country—big distances—big men—big everything, and they came to know it as well as men may know and still live. Broome—where *Thetis* had been more than once—was the pearling centre, a huddle of ramshackle buildings, half of them saloons, running up from a wide sandy beach. Behind it lifted a scrub-covered tableland where a merciless sun smote hard on the naked ribs of earth, and behind that the Great Sandy Desert. A wild place was Broome, a place of wealth and stench, where the great bivalves were spread on the hot sand to rot before being rifled of their milky jewels, and treasure snatched from the sea went through strange hands before it reached the white throats of women in far countries. There was much that happened in Broome that never got any farther.

A week later—it took a week to get what was wanted, on credit—*Thetis* stood out from behind Fremantle breakwater, and set her blunt nose northward at eight knots an hour. She was a mechanical orphan with an ungodly knock in her piston rod and her stern bearing loose, but she moved. Past Dungeness she wallowed, and through South Passage to Sharks' Bay, where shell is plentiful enough but the pearls of poor quality, up by North-west Cape, through the Dampier Archipelago, skirting the untamed coast where gold lies not far back and vagrant rivers vanish in summertime into the earth's dusty crust. So by blazing days and star-strewn nights they sighted Point Larey. Here *Thetis* slowed to a crawl, while Hickman, a small, hook-nosed adventurer with ferrety eyes, stood on the unpainted bridge with the other two, and gazed fixedly about.

Whether he knew it or not, he had been under very close observation, but neither MacFee nor Dunham, who held prolonged conversations when they were alone, could find any flaw in his story. The thing hung together. They had looked up *Vespis*. Registered in Perth, W.A. 270 tons displacement. Built in Newcastle in 1912. J. Murdoch, Owner and Master. All clear enough. Of Hickman himself the register said nothing, but his papers were in order. As to the woman on *Vespis*, Dunham had his doubts, but Hickman's story never varied. He gave it like this:

'Murdoch brought her on board the night before we sailed, and entered her as passenger for Perth. I sized her up, but it

wasn't my business, anyway, so I kept what I thought to myself. Name, Mary Prentice. If we get the log, you'll find it there. No luggage but one small suitcase. No, I'd never seen her before, and wasn't much interested: you know how things are along that coast. When *Vespi*s struck, Murdoch was killed outright by the block, and the woman rushed on deck, yelling, and climbed into the boat that was already being lowered by the crew. She wouldn't leave it, and they upset in a few lengths. In my boat were six others. The gale drove us south-west into the Dampier Archipelago, and we lived on an island for three months till we were picked up by a pearler that dropped us at Gladstone at the mouth of the Wooramel River. The others started up-country for the Murchison goldfields, and I worked my way back to Fremantle. No, I don't know who shipped the pearls or anything about them, only that they're in *Vespi*s safe under, I reckon, twenty fathom of water. And you've got the combination.'

It had been a longish trip, but now *Thetis* loitered with the faintest ripple at her blunt bows. E.N.E. lay Point Larey, skirted with a sparkling line of thunderous surf. No breath stirred on the molten sea, but a ground swell, born in the shallow coastwise waters, set the vessel wallowing till she was like to roll her spars out. All three men were gazing about, till, of a sudden, MacFee shouted:

'There's your reef!'

There it was, betrayed by a thin, tortuous, wrinkled line that appeared and vanished at regular intervals half a mile away. Were there any wind, the thing had torn the surface of the sea to ribbons of spume, but all that now showed was the strange retardation of long-backed swells that marched over it, changing their shape, lifted steeper and higher, and crowned with a swiftly vanishing streak of glittering bubbles. It was all secret and very deadly.

'By God!' murmured Dunham, 'that's a nasty place at night. Not charted either!'

'Nor a lot of others,' nodded Hickman. 'Well, what did I tell you. Why not try the lead? *Vespi*s can't be three hundred yards from where we are now. She didn't do more than clear it before she foundered.'

Dunham began soundings with a greased lead. Twenty fathom—sand—nineteen and a half—sand—twenty—sand, till in something less than an hour the lead caught as though gripped

and would not come up. He glanced at Hickman with a sort of respect, and gave a whistle.

'I've seen some queer things, but nothing like this. We're right on top of her. I reckoned on a week to find her—if ever.'

It was astonishing but quite true, and *Thetis* had come to this sunken atom over a thousand miles of Indian Ocean as though drawn by a magnet. They were on top of her, and in the instant, less than a ship-length ahead, Dunham perceived something small and black that glinted as it vanished in the trough of an unusually deep swell. The truck of *Vespis's* foretopmast! The sight robbed him of breath, but he snatched at the engine-room telegraph, and *Thetis*, backing cautiously away, anchored in eighteen fathoms.

Then came night like a velvet blanket, and far into it they worked, testing air-pump and valves, till all was ready, and Hickman, licking his lips and looking unctuous, said:

'Well, I guess you're satisfied now. Oh yes, I knew the story was pretty hard to swallow, but I'm not the sort to play crooked, and what do I score in getting you up here if it isn't just as I say. Murdoch told me those pearls were worth thirty thousand, and not a cent less.'

'You never saw them?' asked MacFee, polishing the glass of his helmet.

'Only the canvas sack.'

'And that woman knew nothing of them?'

'Murdoch was no such fool. She never dreamed they were there.'

'Women and pearls sometimes get mixed up,' said Dunham dryly. 'We'd better turn in till dawn.'

Dawn found a lessened swell and a sea like fluid emerald, with *Thetis* swinging gently at a slack anchor-chain, when MacFee, standing in his suit and lead-soled boots, took a last look at *Vespis's* deck-plan before the great goggle-eyed helmet was put over his head. The air-pump clanked rhythmically. Dunham was rather silent. He had not been able to get the woman out of his mind, and kept shooting curious little glances at Hickman, who hung about, palpably restless and nervous. Finally MacFee nodded, the helmet was put carefully into position and locked home, the lead weights slung over his shoulders, air-pipe attached, and he stepped heavily into the bight of a rope that ran to the end of *Thetis's* naked gaff.

Beneath a circle of spitting bubbles he went down slowly,

slowly, confiding himself to the clemency of the sea, gripping the life-line, and feeling his blood absorb nitrogen just as the fluid in a soda-water bottle absorbs gas under pressure. As he descended the light faded to a sort of transparency, infinitely soft and delicate, above which the surface shimmered in a multitude of restless planes. At fifty feet he jerked once, and halted so that compression might be more gradual, then down again till, finally, he hung suspended, above the flat floor of ocean and peered about.,

Not a hundred feet away loomed *Vespis*, as she might have been observed through thick glass, motionless, upright, looking extraordinarily tidy, he thought, and as if she had been stowed here on purpose by someone who would shortly come for her again. She slept, but she seemed alive.

MacFee, regarding her with satisfaction, gave two jerks, and touched bottom. Hard firm sand and no shell. He noted that at once. At a little distance a great blur marked the wall of the reef; and *Vespis*, just as Hickman foretold, squatted in the lee of it with no visible sign that her bottom was ripped open.

He walked up to her, climbing on board by slack davit falls, and stood on the nearly level deck. Weed had begun to gather in her scuppers, but save for that her planking was clean. Then he waited, because always in these waters one peril might be expected. Presently, like a ghost of the deep, he saw it approaching.

MacFee was not afraid of sharks, for he had never known them to attack a diver, but their curiosity was disturbing, and a flick of the giant tail might rupture the air-line, in which case all he could do was to swallow as much air as possible and be dragged to the surface without waiting for decompression. This hurt abominably. So now he stood quite motionless while the shape drifted closer, a pelagic monster of bluish grey with elongated snout, wide crescent-shaped mouth showing the large serrated teeth, small, savage eyes and breathing gills near the triangular dorsal fin.

'God!' he whispered in his helmet. 'What a brute!'

After a prolonged scrutiny of the intruder, the thing floated away, and gathering slack in air, life and signal line he advanced toward the rear companion. There were thirteen steps of eight inches each, which gave *Vespis* about seven feet six between decks. The companion landed him directly in the saloon, and here he found disorder, with dishes on the floor covered with slime, some books

holding down an overturned case, a man's sea-boots, a stained cloth, cane chairs floating against the ceiling and a pipe oddly suspended half-way.

A goggle-eyed behemoth, he paused for a moment in the middle of this, then veered toward a door on the port side. It opened into a strong-room or locker where the light was dim, but he could see dish-racks still against the wall so it must once have been a pantry. Opposite was a black safe about three feet square.

'27 right, 37 left, 47 right,' he said to himself, and knelt.

Curious to feel the knob turn so easily! More curious to hear nothing, for he and *Vespis* were steeped in abysmal silence. An orange-coloured fish with palpitating gills swam in from the saloon and darted back between his legs like a streak of flame. MacFee's breath began to come faster, but he was absorbing seven cubic feet of air every minute, and excitement ought to be avoided. His blood tingled, and all he could catch was a faint clank-clank of valves from the deck of his invisible ship. Finally the door yielded, and he pulled it open.

The safe was empty!

He knelt there, incredulous, frowning, biting his lip. Two drawers, three open shelves. Nothing in them! A bubble of prisoned air escaped, and lay like a white opal against the ceiling. Moments passed while he fought with a flood of emotions. Hickman was a liar. But again—and one could not solve it—what profit to Hickman in putting over a thing like this? That brought him up short, so, slowly rising to his leaden feet, he went back to the saloon where he halted, filled with revolt.

Facing him was the spare cabin, its door shut. He had no particular interest there, but something prompted him to try the handle. It turned, but the door itself had jammed tight. This puzzled him, so, after searching about, he went on deck, returning with a short iron bar. At the third effort the door jerked open, and he went in.

A few minutes later he came out, feeling rather sick, and with something in his hand. Wrapping this in the stained tablecloth he made his way to the bridge where, with no difficulty, he found *Vespis's* log in the top drawer of the chart table. Then, suddenly hungry for light and free air, he signalled to be pulled up, and presently emerged with the bundle and sodden book under his arm.

'Well?' barked Dunham as they unscrewed the helmet.



'That safe was empty.' This with a glance at Hickman, whose eyes were strained.

Dunham ripped out an oath, and was turning savagely on the other man, when MacFee raised a stiff arm.

'I haven't finished yet.'

'What's in that bundle?' croaked Hickman, his face a pasty yellow.

'You'll see—in the chart-room—in five minutes.'

Stepping out of the leaden shoes, now unstrapped, he slid off the canvas clothing, and stood half-naked like a chrysalis just freed from its cocoon, breathing slowly with long deep inspirations.

'Keep this till I get back, Jim.'

He went below, taking the log with him, reappeared soon wearing a coat, and made straight for the chart-room away from a curious circle of crew. Here he did not undo the bundle, but placed it between himself and his partner, with the log open at the last written page. His eyes had a steely glint, and he kept one hand in his pocket. Hickman sat across the table, and the diver regarded him as one might some new kind of animal.

'Never did any under-water work, did you?' said he in a voice oddly level.

'No.'

'It makes you feel queer—sometimes—however long you're at it. It's like barging in where you're not expected, yet no one objects. This time I thought I'd get any general information I could—never can tell when it might be useful—so I rooted out *Vespis's* log. You can just read it—ink doesn't run much when pages are tight together—an' I find those pearls were shipped by Isadore Lewis of Broome to his agent in Fremantle. No mention of insurance. Likely he couldn't get it.'

'Murdoch said nothing about that to me,' grunted Hickman, scowling at the log.

'Maybe there's things you didn't mention to him, but as it stands they were Lewis's property. That's that. Now the afternoon *Vespis* cleared, a passenger, a woman, came aboard.'

'Well—I told you, didn't I?'

'You did, but you forgot to say that her passage—it seems she had no money herself—was to be charged against the pay of—who do you think?'

'That's a damned lie: Murdoch made it up.'

MacFee patted the log with a sort of affection.

'It's in my mind that Murdoch was a straight man—perhaps a bit easy—but straight. Anyway, that's what's here. "Charge against pay of W. Hickman. Mate." Now before the woman turned up, he had put the pearls in the safe, of which you had the combination in case anything happened to him. Sort of prophetic, wasn't it? An' they stayed there, but not for long.'

'How the hell can you know that? I never touched them.'

'No, you didn't touch 'em, but soon after *Vespi*s cleared, Mary Prentice got hold of the combination. Maybe she knew it before she came aboard. It's more likely.'

Hickman started up with a choking sound, whereat MacFee drew a revolver from his pocket and fingered it thoughtfully.

'Queer how things seem to sort themselves out if they're left of a sudden just as they are. They take on a kind of pattern.' Then, sharply, 'Sit down, damn you. Yes, I'd bet she got it before she came aboard when the scheme was fixed up.'

'Who from, if you know so much?'

'The man who paid her passage. It hangs together all right. She was to do the job just before reaching Fremantle. Murdoch trusted you, an' wouldn't suspect her. But she was crooked, an' got to work early on the quiet. That's why I found the safe empty.'

'Another damned lie!' bleated Hickman. 'You can't prove it. She's drowned: you're bluffing. You've got the stuff—here—now! Open that bundle! You're a pair of——' He choked over his words, fear and rage struggling in his throat.

'Yes, drowned,' repeated MacFee. 'Hadn't a chance.'

'Then what's all this blasted talk about?'

'Fact is that you told us too much. 'Twas a good enough story to start with, then you messed it up with—well—details. Anyway, I'll straighten it out. Murdoch was killed when *Vespi*s struck. All right—it doesn't matter about that. He's gone. Next you say that Mary Prentice was lost when the first boat upset. A black night, I reckon?'

'Black as hell, and the lights all out. I saw her go down.'

'Sure?'

'I tell you I saw her.'

MacFee shook his head. 'Did you?—no—I reckon not. *Vespi*s scraped her bottom off on the reef an' sank at once. I guess she would. You'd have got to the safe if you could, but there wasn't time, an' you never dreamed that the woman had been

there already. No—you just wanted to save your own neck, an' didn't trouble about her, because she was going to be drowned. That suited you all right, for with her an' Murdoch out of the way, you'd be the only one left with the combination. So what's to prevent you coming back here with a diver just as you have, eh ?'

Hickman launched into a string of oaths till the other man, cutting him short, began to untie the dripping bundle.

'She *was* drowned, God rest her poor soul, but not from that first boat. When *Vespis* struck, she struck hard, an' warped her frame so badly that the door of the spare cabin jammed tight, an' Mary Prentice was inside, trapped like a rat. You didn't know that, or you wouldn't have taken the chance you have. I had a job to break in with a bar, an' she floated up against me with—look, Hickman !—with this little sack hanging round her neck.'

'Double-crossed me !' breathed Hickman in a shaky whisper.

'Just as you double-crossed Murdoch, or tried to. She paid, oh yes, she paid, an' must have had a tough minute or so hammering on that door, but it wouldn't last long. She's there now, if you want to go down.'

The man collapsed, his face twisting, gazing at the diver, helpless, fascinated.

'What—what are you going to——'

'Lift our hook, make for Broome right away, leave the stuff in the bank, an' hunt up Isadore Lewis. We'll tell him the whole thing, an' claim half value as salvage money. We'll get it, insured or not.'

'But—but where do I come in ?'

'That,' said MacFee satirically, 'is a knotty point. We might see the Magistrate, give your story an' mine, an' ask him.'

### THE SEAL WOMAN.

'TWAS Murdo, son of Iver,  
Returning late and lone,  
Found a seal woman sitting  
White on a wave-washed stone,  
And took her for his own.

She stacked and smoored his peat sods,  
She cooked and bare him child  
Like any mortal woman,  
But strange her eyes and wild,  
And sea-wise she beguiled.

For though the sea may flood you  
With warm and tender spray,  
True to its own wild impulse  
How swift it ebbs away,  
And goes its moon-drawn way!

So, when the fit was on her,  
She'd rise and she would roam  
Far from the shelling's shelter  
Night-long beside the foam,  
Wild for her cold sea home.

Her cloak of shining sealskin  
He'd cunningly put past  
Where she could never find it,  
And so he held her fast,  
For seven long years he held her,  
And lost her at the last.

Late in the long clear gloaming  
Of the northern summer night  
Murdo returning saw her,  
Her sealrobe glistening bright,  
Sleeked with a sheen of light.

How she had chanced upon it  
He never was to ken,  
Deer-like she ran to the water,  
Laughed for pure joy, and then  
Plunged from the sight of men.

He had never heard her laughter,  
Never had seen her tears  
In all their life together ;  
Unvexed by mortal fears  
Her smooth white sea-born beauty  
Had aged not with the years.

Many's the sweet isleswoman  
Would have cheered his lonely hearth,  
But he who mourns an immortal  
Is blind to loves of earth ;  
And so with his strange children,  
Half fairy by their birth.

Their eyes were sunlit water,  
Their hair sea-ruffled sand,  
Their loves were lonely places,  
Ranging the sea and land  
They wandered, ever seeking  
What life cannot command.

They passed the thin queer seal blood  
On in their mortal lives—  
In Murdo's children's children  
The fairy strain survives,  
Beware of love towards them,  
Ye who live human lives !

Beneath our roofs they stifle,  
They faint beside our fires,  
Their loves are lonely places,  
In them there still suspires  
The strange withdrawn sea nature,  
With its fluctuant desires.

For though the sea may flood you  
With warm and tender spray,  
True to its own wild impulse  
How swift it ebbs away,  
And goes its moon-drawn way !

Beware, beware of loving,  
O mortal, such as they !

A. V. STUART.

*Edinburgh.*

### THREE POEMS.

#### I.

#### ON TURNBERRY SHORE.

THE long low wave licks up the shining beach,  
With fretful froth upon its icy tongue,  
But still you lie beyond its hungry reach,  
With one wild white and storm-tipped wing out-flung  
As if it swept in its slow beat once more,  
And knew the tides and currents of the gale,  
Knew when to sink outspread, and when to soar,  
Beating the buoyant air with feathered flail.  
But now you lie, the prisoner of the land . . .  
So still, your green webbed feet towards the sea,  
One wide wing folded close and happed in sand,  
The other stretched in silent mockery.  
Up-flung defiance in your white plumed head.  
Creep close, O Sea, and take your deathless dead.



## II.

## WINTER WOODS.

THERE is a stillness in the winter woods.  
The sudden eager pause in music heard ;  
The breathless spirit that in silence broods  
Over a sad word, or a happy word . . .

'I love you.' . . . 'He is dead.' Those words that lie  
In the deep silence of Thought's soundless sea. . . .  
And so these trees against that sullen sky,  
Stand tranced and still in dark tranquillity,

Living the silent pause that wrapped their death,  
And holds their coming life in its calm womb . . .  
Their life . . . the honey of the snowdrop's breath,  
And on their budding boughs the velvet bloom.

## III.

## WHAT WE HAVE LEFT UNSAID.

WHAT we have left unsaid,  
Is what we are.  
Before our spirit's star,  
Words were afraid.

Our utmost good and ill  
No words can frame ;  
Untold, our purest flame  
Must leap at will

In secret and unseen.  
Hidden and dark,  
That only we can mark,  
The small and mean

Raises its wretched head.  
And so through life,  
We have this secret strife ;  
This joy, this dread.

PHILIPPA GALLOWAY.

*Cumloden, 1934.*

## CONVERTING THE POPE.

BY THE REV. JAMES WALL.

GEORGE TOWNSEND, who flourished as a cathedral dignitary in the first half of the nineteenth century, was a man of broad outlook, a more than respectable theologian and a sincere Christian minister. But his long life and conventional labours are eclipsed by his one crowded hour of glorious adventure, wherein he compassed sea and land to make one proselyte—no less a victim than Pio Nono himself, while he was relieved from the more unpleasant consequences of his missionary zeal by its complete failure. However, the attempt itself, together with the extraordinary civility of his reception, constitutes what must be a notable and perhaps unique event in the many-coloured history of religion, and of the Vatican.

Townsend received his early education at Ramsgate, where he was born in 1788 of dissenting stock, though he claimed kinship with one of the bishops who were sent to the Tower for opposing the Papal tendencies of James II. Through the good offices of Richard Cumberland the dramatist, he was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge. As an undergraduate he achieved no brilliant academic honours, but steeped himself in the study of theology, gained the wider outlook, and published his first literary work, a poem, whose title, 'Armageddon,' presaged religious controversies ahead. Shortly after his ordination he was appointed to a professorship at the new Military College at Sandhurst. About this time the learned world was reeling under the sensational effects of Sir William Drummond's *Oedipus Judaicus*; Sir William, a man of undoubted talent and a considerable Orientalist, had endeavoured to prove that the twelve patriarchs were nothing but the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Townsend countered this with an almost Knoxiously wayward ingenuity, and by a similar reasoning explained away not the patriarchs but the twelve Cæsars. His more constructive work, *The Chronological Arrangement of the Holy Bible*, the first part of which he published in 1821, and which was to remain his principal contribution to theology, brought him to the notice of Bishop Shute Barrington, who despite his eighty-eight years was still on the look-out for men of promise and of literary ability for

his diocese of Durham, and invited Townsend to become his chaplain.

The Test Act, now on the verge of repeal, was one of the burning questions of the day. Bishop Barrington would have liked to reply to the *Roman Catholic Declaration* of Charles Butler and others, but feeling the task too great for him, deputed it to his youthful and zealous chaplain. In six weeks Townsend produced his *Accusations of History against the Church of Rome*; and though it failed to stem the rising tide of toleration, it gained him in 1825 the tenth stall in Durham Cathedral, which he was to enjoy for the rest of his long life.

At first he combined the care of a parish with his Cathedral duties, at the same time publishing volumes of sermons and pamphlets on Church reform, and working assiduously for the Conservative interests in politics. Presently in 1842 he put into practice the doctrine he had previously advocated in the *Abolition of Pluralities*, and resigned his living, giving himself thereafter to literary work, both prose and verse. This year saw also the publication of a burlesque *Life and Defence of the Principles of Bishop Bonner*, a work of wit, but in questionable taste, of which he was afterwards ashamed: in any case, a strange work for one who was shortly to undertake so delicate a mission of diplomacy as the conversion of the Pope to Anglican orthodoxy.

In 1850 Townsend had recently concluded the sixth and last part of his monumental work on the Pentateuch, entitled *Scriptural Communion with God*, and dedicated, with characteristic immodesty, to the 'General Prelacy of the Universal Church,' other parts having been dedicated severally to Pope Gregory XVI, the Temporal Princes of Europe, and Queen Victoria. These dedications, like Mr. Shaw's prefaces, contained some of the most important material in the book. In them he advocated the reunion of the Churches through the reconsideration of the findings of the Council of Trent. If the Pope refused to take action, then it became the duty of the temporal rulers of Europe, as the successors of Constantine, 'to endeavour, on the basis of truth, without regard to the Pope, to re-establish peace and union on earth.' Nothing, however, could be done to re-unite the sundered Churches 'on the basis of the old Popery.'

Thus Townsend was busily employing his mighty pen, and would have written much more like it, had not his physician prescribed

Continental travel. The patient pleaded outstanding literary work. But the doctor was obdurate, and assured him that he would work all the better afterwards for a holiday. Then came a flash of inspiration; he would combine travel with the pursuit of his literary objectives by going to Rome, and there making his suggestions in person to his arch-enemy, 'the one great obstacle to the reunion of the Christian Churches.' As the laws of England forbade any of the bishops from giving letters of commendation, he would obtain them from a foreign bishop in communion with Rome. So he set out, praying that 'Rome might become as England and that England might never become like Rome.'

Thus on a Tuesday in January, 1850, the Canon and his wife left London for Boulogne, amid the farewells of their friends. Some accorded them guarded approval, others derisive laughter. The Bishop of London hoped they would not be kept in Rome; the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom Townsend had previously taken the precaution of sending copies of his works, refused to allow his name to be used in connection with the venture, and although he rather discouraged Townsend's perseverance, expressed kind and friendly wishes.

In Paris they put up at the Hôtel Meurice, where Lord Brougham was staying. Lord Brougham happened to be in Townsend's debt. At Durham the great Benedictine traditions of hospitality, which were so signally maintained during the eighteenth century, were not yet extinct, and it was the custom during Assizes for the canons to offer hospitality to the senior barristers. Twenty years ago Mr. Brougham (as he was then) had given offence through his speeches in a celebrated case, and was refused the entrée to polite ecclesiastical society. The young Townsend, then as now a Daniel, stood alone, and defying the conventions of respectability and the practice of his seniors, included Brougham among his guests. Thus was laid the foundation of a long and firm friendship, which was now to stand Townsend in good stead. He was intending to obtain from the English Ambassador an introduction to the Archbishop of Paris, of whom in turn he would ask letters commendatory to the Pope. Unfortunately he had omitted to bring any letters of introduction to the Ambassador, Lord Normanby, and was thinking that he would have to call upon him as the friend and neighbour of his father-in-law, Lord Ravensworth. The ex-dissenter of Ramsgate as a Canon of Durham was moving in the best circles, but was not quite sure of his reception under these circumstances.

At this juncture he met Brougham, and so with his aid was enabled to turn the first corner of his tortuous and adventurous road.

Before the day of the interview with the Archbishop the Townsends went around the conventional sights of Paris, St. Cloud and Sèvres. In the Chapel of the Invalides Mrs. Townsend asked, rather contentiously, if Protestant as well as Roman Catholic veterans were admitted. '*O oui*, madame, there is no difference here. They worship the *Bon Dieu*, we worship the *Vierge*,' answered their conductor, breathing a greater degree of toleration than the prospective missionary of conciliation exhibited in her reply. However, Mrs. Townsend was not called upon to go with her husband to the Archbishop's. The Canon, though a good scholar, was a singularly poor linguist, and his wife accompanied him in these travels partly as an interpreter. But while they were reflecting on the prejudice which would be occasioned to the chance of an interview with the Archbishop through the presence of a lady, a former correspondent of *The Times*, himself a Roman Catholic, had entered Lord Brougham's apartment just as Townsend was leaving, and was then and there impressed to stand by the Canon as his interpreter during the interview.

Archbishop Sibour received them with every mark of courtesy and kindness. He explained that he had already had some conversation with the Ambassador, and that he was glad to see the Monsieur. 'But what is the particular object which Monsieur has in view?' Townsend reminded him of the custom of the primitive Church in granting letters commendatory, and preserved a discreet silence about the inhibition placed by English law on bishops and statesmen from corresponding with the court of Rome. He expatiated on his panacea of the General Council, and the Archbishop adduced the more obvious obstacles. The discussion then ranged from the attempt made in the reign of Queen Anne by Dupin the historian and Archbishop Wake to reunite the churches of England and France, to Puseyism. Asked Mgr. Sibour, abruptly: 'Is Monsieur a Puseyite?' Monsieur thought: 'I am sorry to be regarded as one of those imbeciles who imagine that either Christian peace or Christian holiness can be restored to the Universal Church by bringing the Church of England into conformity with that of Rome, instead of bringing the Church of Rome into conformity with its own pristine, primitive condition, of which the best extant model, however imperfect it may be, is the Reformed Church of England.' But what Monsieur said was: 'I am an Episcopalian

Christian and I can assume nor bear no other appellation.' He went on to explain, with an almost prophetic insight into the world of to-day, that the time was past for feuds between Christians and Christians, and that it was his plan to 'unite all Christians against the Infidelity and Socialism of the day.' He was promised the letter.

As soon as the letter arrived, they left Paris by the diligence, the railway to the south being not yet completed. The coach lumbered through the mud and water, and for the next few days they travelled to the shouts of the drivers, the *Sacre Dieus*, the groans, the yoo-ups, the yoo-icks, the unrepeatable, the unspellable ejaculations to the saints, to the horses, and to the passers-by. There were two other passengers in the coach, a Protestant of Nismes, with whom to this obligato the Canon endeavoured to hold 'instructive conversation' in Latin, and a French army officer, who was invited through Mrs. Townsend to declare his views on the French Revolution.

At Valence the pilgrims made their first acquaintance, albeit vicariously, with the Holy Father. Townsend went, as always and in private duty bound, first to the cathedral, and there saw a large monument in whose golden lettering occurred the name of Pio Nono. His first thought, weak but pardonable, was to seek in the inscription an omen of the issue of the journey. On closer scrutiny he found that it was a memorial of the gratitude of the Canons of the Cathedral of Valence to the Pope, for having allowed the bowels of his predecessor, who died at Valence, to rest there, while the body was conveyed for burial to Rome. The Canon remembered with contemptuous pride the austerity, the barrenness of his own cathedral among the Northern hills, and went on his way a sadder man.

On the boat to Avignon he engaged in a typical conversation with a Roman priest, a canon of Lyons. That is to say, they spoke to each other in Latin, and whenever the variations in their pronunciation were so great as to produce utter unintelligibility, they wrote down their reflections, as best the vibration of a small steamer would allow. The sunrise prompted a discussion on Sun-worship. . . . "But Jesus Christ," we both said by a singular coincidence at the same moment, "is the true image of God, . . . the Sun of Righteousness." Thus they talked on patristic theology and the continental pronunciation of Greek and Latin; of Durham and its past history, Wolsey, Henry VIII—and so to the influence of Anglican movements on continental thought and religion. They journeyed through the south of France, to Marseilles, Genoa,



Livorno, Civita Vecchia, and at long last, a month after leaving England, to the haven where they would be—Rome.

When they arrived there on February 20, the Pope was at Naples. Cardinal Mezzofanti, to whom they had an introduction from Lord Brougham, was dead; a monsignor to whom he had another from the Duke of Devonshire had incurred the displeasure of the government and was in exile. The outlook was once more uncertain, when again his former hospitality bore good fruit. A barrister of the Northern circuit, in Italy for his sister's health, called on them, and placed his knowledge of Rome at their disposal. They moved from the Hôtel Czerni to apartments, which he helped them to find in the Via del Babuino, and settled down to await the Pope's return. Hearing that his former guest and fellow-scholar, Sir Gardner Wilkinson, the Egyptian traveller, was in apartments in the Corso, he lost no time in calling on him. The English consul, to whom he declared his convictions and intention, advised him to communicate his plan to none at Rome, as otherwise obstacles would certainly be put in his way, and to proceed to Naples to endeavour to see the Pontiff there. There was considerable uncertainty when the Pope would come back to the Vatican. 'He will certainly be back to the ceremonies of the Holy Week,' said one; 'he will return in a week'—'in fifteen days'—'in a month,' said others. Everywhere brooded that rather haughty timelessness which is perhaps typical of the Vatican, and befits its eternity. The visitors finally decided to settle down for a protracted stay, touring the different places of interest, renewing friendships and conversing freely with strangers, until they became acquaintances.

Despite the linguistic difficulties of his conversation, the quixotic nature of his enterprise and the rigidity of his views, Townsend was everywhere received with unfailing courtesy. Among those to whom his barrister friend introduced him was Francesco Mesaheb, a Jesuit, who had translated the Bible into Arabic and was now employed by the College of Propaganda in translating the Canons of a Maronite Council into Latin. The Canon found Mesaheb able in scholarship and astute in dialectic, holding views diametrically opposed to his own on the seat of authority in religion and on the conditions of reunion, and yet 'as amiable and courteous as he was learned and dexterous in argument.' At other times Mesaheb accompanied his guest round the Propaganda, the Vatican and the Capitol.

Still the Pope did not return. The discussions with Meseheb were renewed and repeated, and patience must have been tried to the utmost as the old arguments, the same stilted and debased Latin phrases occurred again and again. Meseheb then said that he was acquainted with many of the cardinals, and would gladly do all he could through them to facilitate the proposed interview. He knew, for example, Cardinal Mai, the great Jesuit scholar and the discoverer of the celebrated fragments of Cicero's 'Republic.' Townsend had long been acquainted with the very handsome edition of Homeric Fragments which Mai produced in 1819, a 'noble specimen of scholarship, typography and engraving' (as indeed it is), a copy of which lay in the Chapter Library at Durham; and he called on Meseheb to make good his promise.

The Cardinal received him with that courtesy to which he was now familiar, and which was (whether he perceived it or not) in marked contrast to his own boorish behaviour whenever he went in the course of this pilgrimage into any church of the Latin rite. The Canon opened with some pleasant observations, in Latin, on the noble array of books which lined the shelves around them. The Cardinal tactfully regretted that his own English was hardly up to standard, and suggested that they should try French. This was beyond the Canon, so they had to come back to Latin, relying on Meseheb to interpret Townsend's anglicised Latin into Italian, whenever the conversation threatened to break down.

The talk consisted for the most part of a monologue by Townsend, in which all his hobby-horses appeared in due order. The Cardinal listened politely, and not without sympathy. The objections which he raised in argument were practical, and were not brought forward in any obstructionist spirit. He concluded by promising him a letter to the Pope, and wishing him success. He was as good as his word; he wrote to Mgr. Borromeo, the Chamberlain, and arranged for the interview. Townsend in return made him a present of a new German publication on the Samaritans, a written exposition of what he had wished to say at their meeting but had been prevented from saying clearly by his linguistic deficiency, and a cordial invitation, should the Cardinal ever have to fly the country, to 'an humble roof and a frugal but hospitable table at the College of Durham.'

More than a month later, on Friday, April 26, came the great day of the audience. The gentleman on whose services as an inter-

preter he had relied having failed him at the last minute, the name of Mrs. Townsend had been included in the official invitation. The morning they spent transcribing the memorial which was to be submitted into the Pope's hand. As the time drew near, the Canon and his wife made their way through the innumerable rooms and the interminable passages and corridors of the Vatican, until they joined other parties who were waiting in the Sistine Chapel. At half-past five they were summoned. More rooms, corridors and staircases, until at last this odd couple, bent on their singular mission, trod the uncarpeted brick floor of the Audience Chamber. Bowing three times as to their own Queen, and so far relaxing as to kiss the proffered hand, they seated themselves on ottomans near the dais.

The Pope began the conversation with trivial remarks about travelling in Italy, in Italian, and addressed to Mrs. Townsend. The protagonist remaining dumb, the Pope asked in what language her husband wished to address him. Mrs. Townsend answered that he wished to address him in Latin. The Pope bowed, and the Canon began once more the well-rehearsed tale of his past movements and his salutary projects for the healing of the wounds of the Church. Much of the strength of modern infidelity could be traced to the disunion of Christians. He related the correspondence that had passed between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dupin, and reminded His Holiness of the conclusion of the English archbishop, that in a General Council of the West the English Church would give the Pope the first place of order, though not of jurisdiction. It was within the power of the Pope, he proceeded, to commence the movement towards general reunion by summoning a Council with a view to 'the reconsideration of the past,' and all Christian princes would rejoice at the anticipation of such a peace—as the world could hardly be expected to give.

The Pope urged the practical difficulties of such a council: the expense, the difference between the opponents and the adherents of the Church, and the variety of opinion even on the subject of Sacraments. The Church had already made up her mind on the chief points. Perhaps the several Provincial Councils then being summoned would prepare the world for the proposed General Council.

Townsend afterwards related that his nervous agitation, the fervency of his inward prayers and the pathos of his appeal to the Pope conspired to bring 'tears into his (the Pope's) eyes.' At this moment of emotional vantage, the Canon thrust towards him two

copies of the memorandum, an English version and an Italian translation, saying: 'I am a Protestant, *Sancte pater*, and I have always been an enemy of your Church; but there will not be found in this document any expression which will be personally offensive.' The Pope looked surprised, whether because he understood his weird suppliant to be calling him 'Saint Peter,' or because his grasp of the Canon's latinity extended to the first part of his dramatic protestation, but not to the second. Mrs. Townsend came to the rescue, and broke the awkward silence by an exposition, in Italian, of some of the more obvious of her husband's merits. The Pope then took the memorial, and said he would read it with attention; and after more general conversation the audience ended, having lasted nearly forty minutes.

Next day a message arrived for the Canon that, while His Holiness thanked him for the memorial, his conclusions on the subject underwent no alteration. Shortly afterwards the Pope discussed the conference with two gentlemen, who promptly sent written word to Townsend. His Holiness alluded to his having seen 'Il Canone de Durham,' an excellent and good man who had come with 'an object regarding the Church.' 'But,' he continued, 'we conversed in Latin; and the pronounciation of Latin is so different in England and Italy that I did not well understand him.' He praised his warm heart, but did not think the proposal of calling a General Council would lead to the desired effect. Asked if in the event of the Anglican Church making any advance towards that of Rome, he thought the Catholics would give up anything, the Pope replied with a quick movement: 'Nothing. We would give up nothing. We find all our doctrines in the Bible, and therefore we cannot change any point.' Condemning the personal latitude allowed by the Anglican Church in judging the Scriptures, he conceded: 'The Anglican Church, however, is the only one in the world, except the Roman Catholic Church, that has the force and power to do good to religion and advance its cause.'

Even so, between the two there was a great gulf fixed, which it would take more than the fervour of the Canon and the diplomatic benevolence of Pio Nono to bridge. A few days later Mgr. de Merode, accompanied by Dr. Grant, the head of the English College (who had been educated at Ushaw College, a mile or two from Durham), as his interpreter, called on Townsend to inform him that His Holiness had read the memorial and desired to converse further with him on its contents; he was, however, much engaged for the

present. Townsend eagerly deemed the implied invitation a command, and it was agreed that he should be ready for the second interview after an excursion to Naples he had already arranged.

The weeks passed. Towards the end of May he began to turn his thoughts to home and duty. After all, he was a canon of Durham, and his canonry entailed a limited period of residence, if few more onerous duties. A note which he sent to Dr. Grant suggesting the expediting of the second interview, first reached the hands of another of the same name (a bad omen), who replied discouragingly that he was himself going into a spiritual retreat for a week and would thus be cut off from all active co-operation. Then, when it found the Dr. Grant of the English College, it evoked but a cool answer. Hundreds were waiting for audiences; some had been waiting for several weeks; the Pope had only sent the message by Mgr. de Merode to allow him to express his meaning through an interpreter, in the event of his having anything to add to the memorial; that 'the reply of His Holiness to the memorial would of course be as before, that such a union of Christians even by means of a council is utterly hopeless and impracticable. . . .'

Reluctantly but inevitably he prepared to return home. He had endured the heat of the Italian summer in the hope of a second interview, which he now saw would not be granted, or if ever granted, would be condemned to futility. He had moved freely in an 'unbibled' land, always becoming more and more surprised and exasperated at the superstition of the populace, and, despite their superficial courtesy and friendliness, the attitude of the priests. They would discuss harmless generalities freely; but when he invited an Irish friar to say with him the Lord's Prayer, he was met with an uncompromising refusal. Not even the pleasure of his return by Zurich and up the Rhine, not even his joy at seeing his own country after an absence of six months, could soften for him the memories of his Italian tour, or enable him, with a due sense of proportion, to see the slightly humorous aspect of the whole escapade. To his previous convictions of the iniquities of the Church of Rome were added a rankling and an embitterment, which persisted until he died nine years later, having all but fulfilled the allotted span, and having enriched the world by his scholarship, his genial hospitality, and not least by the history of a gallant if unsuccessful quest, the Conversion of the Pope.

## DREAMS.

BY WILLIAM F. FIGGIS.

OF all the phenomena in the range of human experience perhaps none is more common than that of the nocturnal adventures which we term dreams.

It is difficult to understand how the mind is actively engaged in these visions while the body slumbers. They are not like the moving pictures of a film but very real experiences. Sometimes the accidents and incidents of everyday life are reproduced, and can be easily recognised however they may be distorted. But in some dreams we seem to be actors in scenes and under circumstances wholly outside our normal ken.

All my life I have been subject to strange dreams. I give three examples. The predisposing experiences from which the first two had their origin were sufficiently obvious, although the incidents were curiously transformed and fantastic. The third is upon a different plane. From whence the suggestions came I cannot imagine. My surroundings, circumstances and thoughts were all very far from furnishing the material; nor had my reading provided thread with which such a fabric might be woven. In short, I cannot give any explanation whatever.

### I.

The first of the three dreams occurred when I was quite young.

My work has always been associated with books. I worked hard, and often it was close upon eleven o'clock at night when I returned home.

On these occasions a light supper would await me, and sometimes my brother would read me a short story while I consumed my repast. This was always most restful. On this particular night he read me, for the first time, Kipling's 'Maltese Cat.' Any one who has not read this story will have no further interest in the dream, but as it is probably the finest short story in the English



language, he may find it worth while to leave my dreams and read this masterpiece.

The following night I was returning from my business in Dublin, and as I started to cross a crowded street, one of the famous, and now almost extinct, Irish jaunting cars came rapidly towards me. Just as it was alongside the horse slipped, and the occupants—three on each side and the jarvey—were flung heavily to the ground. I immediately ran to the horse and sat on his head, while many rushed in to lend their aid to the unfortunate sufferers. Soon the police were on the scene and there was quite a little commotion.

Meanwhile I had some difficulty in maintaining my position. The horse somehow managed to get its head round under my thigh, and looking up at me distinctly winked, seemingly to convey the information that he had managed the fall himself, as he was being maltreated. I returned him a wink of understanding, but endeavoured to resume my more commanding position upon his head. A moment later he gave me a nip which immediately caused me to awake.

This was the adaption of the 'Maltese Cat' to my environment on the night when I first heard the story.

## II.

The Great War was over, and the troublous times in Ireland were passing. Many of the old gentry were leaving the country, and their libraries were being dispersed. It fell to my lot to visit several of these and, no doubt, my mind was more or less obsessed with the subject of books.

One night I fell asleep and had the following strange dream.

It seemed to me that I was down in the country at an old manor-house. A very important function was in progress, and no less a personage than King George was present. I was master of ceremonies, organiser, and general factotum. There had been a great military parade in the morning, and I had thoughtfully arranged that His Majesty should have the afternoon to himself, and be completely undisturbed.

There was a pleasant library with large french windows opening on to a beautiful terraced lawn, with park-land beyond. This was laid out for His Majesty's afternoon siesta, and he was greatly pleased. Late in the afternoon, however, it became necessary to

consult his wishes upon some matter, and I ventured into the apartment.

Dreams apparently relieve one of all embarrassment. I certainly felt none as I made my enquiries as to whether His Majesty was fatigued after his strenuous morning. He replied very affably that he was not at all fatigued, but on the contrary had enjoyed his morning. He admired the books, and the handsome old book-cases, surprised to find them in such a remote part of the country. 'Yes,' I replied, 'and there are many fine originals here.'

Some further conversation had passed between us, when pointing to a large folio which lay apart on a bottom shelf, 'Now what do you suppose that big volume is?' he said. 'Ah, Your Majesty,' I replied with great interest, 'that is no less than a genuine Caxton.' 'A Caxton,' he answered, 'and what the dickens is that?' I looked a little pityingly at him; 'Your Majesty,' I said, 'Caxton was the name of one of the *favourites* in the *New Market* of his day.'

This sally I, of course, expected would be lost upon his intelligence, but he was not at all pleased. 'I see,' said he, 'that you are a bit of an *original* yourself.'

His rebuke was sufficient to awaken me.

### III.

One peculiarity marked the third of these dreams. Although the sensations in it were far more vivid, it was as if not I myself but some *alter ego* was the subject.

In my dream a long period of mental strain seemed to be approaching an inevitable crisis. Multitudes of others were no better off than I, but to me, at least, to contemplate bankruptcy, disgrace and most hapless of all, my dear wife and family in poverty and want, was insufferable. I determined to do away with myself.

It appeared to be the end of an oppressively hot day: one of those electrified days which get on the nerves. Not wishing to arouse suspicions as to my intentions I went to bed as usual. My mind, being more at ease since I had made my drastic decision, ceased to worry. Very soon I fell asleep and had a dream *within my dream*.

I seemed to glide painlessly down a nearly perpendicular chute into a black abyss, and when my descent ceased my contemplated suicide was an accomplished fact.

Just as when one awakens after an operation, returning con-

sciousness revealed to me my hideous plight. I stood in unutterable darkness. Even now that darkness returns to me as an experience not of earth: intense, palpable, terrifying.

With the appalling darkness there brooded over the place a fearful stillness. It seemed to swarm at me. The stillest spot on earth yields sounds of some kind: sounds that would have been music in that profundity of silence.

I was conscious of spirits flitting past on my right hand joyously, and on my left, to some unknown destination. This consciousness was derived from some new sense, for there was neither sight nor sound. There was no way in which I could measure the passage of time. I had not even a heart whose beat might have afforded some companionship. I tried to count, but at this my brain soon revolted.

The waiting seemed interminable—and waiting for what? I did not feel that I should faint, or go mad, or that any form of unconsciousness would end my terror. I dared not take a step forward. I dared not sit down. Not that I feared any worse condition, but I was transfixed with a continuous horror. All my life I have loathed the sight of a rat, yet here I would have hailed one joyfully.

It is impossible for me to convey any adequate idea of this seemingly endless waiting. I appeared to stand on, on, on, for years in that one position. The entire span of my life on earth seemed short in comparison. Ceaseless wonderings succeeded wonderings. Was this eternity? Would anything happen to end my misery?

At length, as I continued to gaze vacantly into the black void, I descried in the far, far distance the outline of a figure. At first like a speck on the horizon, but gradually approaching until the tall form of a man became visible. The light by which he became discernible emanated from his person and was just sufficient to make his presence radiant. Very gradually he came near, and at length stood before me and commanded me to speak.

'What is your name?' he said in a deep, strong, but not unkindly voice. When I answered this he next asked, 'And how do you come to be here?' I told him that I had died. 'That is strange, very strange,' he said, 'we have received no intelligence concerning you. Word was brought to me that you came to these regions this morning, and now it is afternoon, but still have we no commands. Follow me.' Shaking, yet with glimmering hope,

I followed. He led me to a kind of grotto at the top of which was a shallow niche, where he motioned me to sit. 'Remain here,' he commanded, 'and should we receive any word concerning you I shall at once return.'

He left me and again the impenetrable gloom and agonising silence closed in upon me.

The awful, almost inconceivable fact that I had been in my dungeon less than one day gnawed at my soul. How could I face another hour? Yet was there no alternative, but sit I must and commune with my own blackest thoughts.

I shall not seek further to describe the terrors which I suffered or try to convey any idea of the duration of this my second term of misery.

At last the yearned-for break came. But alas! the issue.

My former visitant again appeared. On this occasion he was standing suddenly before me ere I was aware, for the walls of the grotto confined me within an inner cell of blackness.

'It is very strange,' he said; 'it is now late evening and still we have no word of your coming.' Seized with panic I threw myself at his feet. 'Sir, oh, Sir,' I cried, 'I did not tell you all the truth. I took my own life.'

He fastened his eyes upon me: kind but fateful eyes, and in tones of deepest compassion said, 'Suicide, poor wretch! Then I can tell you your present fate. *You must abide here until your appointed time for earth has been fulfilled*, nor can I visit you again.'

His words, his look fell upon me with a shock of concentrated agony which I endured for a few, vivid, never-to-be-forgotten moments. Then I awoke completely from my double dream.

The rebound of relief was ecstatic. I was alive. I was myself. The light of day, the joy of companionship were almost overpowering. Certainly I had never at any time contemplated suicide, and now the very thought of it for any mortal was terrible.

For the rest of my life I shall eagerly embrace every opportunity to warn my fellow-men of this vision of appalling retribution.

## WANDERINGS IN CHELSEA.

BY THE HON. JULIET GARDNER.

CHELSEA is best remembered by young people for its associations with artists, and its stories of 'wild parties.' They possibly do not know, or are not interested enough to recollect, as they drive or walk up the slender length of the King's Road, tales of its past history. For them, on summer nights, it may represent a hot, crowded place. In winter, they will be too hurried to perceive the beauty of its old squares, its faded houses, and the lamplight falling peacefully on barrows of gay, assorted flowers and fruit. They will not see, as they pass, the white house with the green shutters and the small garden closed in from the road by the spreading protection of trees—guardians of the threshold in an age of menace and destruction. Memory, and its special story, its silent dedication, is to them no insistent statement vital still as the living definition of the present. But, whether sought or forsaken, the fire and force of events are part of the texture of life—pictures which serve their generation, and afford historical illustration for future reading. And in that reading some glow remains, which the power of the imagination can fan into flame until it burns once more, and loses nothing by that backward glance. Perhaps, in that moment of fluttering recapture, there arises the conviction that the intelligibility of the present is due mainly to the manifold and comprehensive character of other centuries, its particular genius and truth.

The history of Chelsea claims more than merely local interest; it extends to a wide area of sympathy and attachment. It is truly said that its influence and association with great people, their thoughts and deeds, belong to the development of the country, and not to a privileged few. 'The past,' as Leigh Hunt wrote, 'is the heirloom of the world.' At every turn of the street, we are reminded of some interesting record—a tree, a house, an alley, contribute to the written page. For these are no ordinary trees, houses, or alleys, but spectators endowed with definite features to be recognised and revered by the passer-by. Twilight in Chelsea is a deeper, a more thoughtful twilight. In some strange manner, it never ob-

litterates or disfigures buildings hiding in the dusk. It casts an illuminating warmth upon the little garden, glimpsed through the dark passage; here the flowers spread their fragrance most graciously, velvet and satin petals, blooming, radiant under tilt of crooked roof. Here is Beauty in high expression of surrender to the sun, the moon, the generous, abiding earth. Here the shade of the plane-trees is most restful—most enfolding and benevolent of all city trees. And, in the winter, it is a country wind which agitates and blows about the blackened elms, and greets the wanderer with vigour. A primeval wind, tenacious in spirit as is the history of the place it visits.

And thus, as we move through the streets of Chelsea, by day or by night, we can feel softly moving with us—like mists hanging over 'a wide, noiseless river'—the silver eloquence of another era. Grimy walls are more than grimy walls—unpainted, drawn back into obscurity. The sunshine on the shuttered walls of that old house calls forth its very being to live again, as it once lived, a place of moods and elegance, measured and measuring; notes in a scale, rendering from even so great a distance the musical sounds of mellowed harmony.

History paints little pictures on the mind as we walk along; it takes the shape of vignettes which, however imperfect, however dim and outlined in shadow, have quality and marking of their own. Like reflections in a pool in some reposeful place, they assume an almost classical severity of design; reflections which the passing wind quivers into life, and, like points of light in a distant landscape, start into awakening.

Until the Stuart period, Chelsea inland was a wild, uncultivated place composed of heath and common; a Chelsea that was only thinly populated with 'lovely villas' when Sir Thomas More built his house in 1520 a short distance from the river, his garden a source of delight to all who saw it. And this at a time when gardening was in the elementary stages of its development. Mr. Reginald Blunt, in *Red Anchor Pieces*, describes the house from the two plans which Mr. Walter Godfrey found among the Hatfield Papers and published in the *Architectural Review*. Mr. Blunt is of the opinion that these plans 'certainly seem to represent the actual ground and first floors of Sir Thomas More's house before it was touched by Cecil. . . . They show a house of distinctly Tudor type, with a main South front some 150 feet in width, with advanced bays at each end, and deep oriels on either side of the projecting central entrance porch.'



'The place,' says Heywood, 'was wonderfully charming.' Framed in a natural background of woods and hills, it looked upon the flowing river, with its barges and traffic and wider contacts with the world beyond the life of London, of which it touched the fringe. Beauty of learning, beauty of Nature cultivated to suit man's tastes, combined with a high philosophy of endeavour which forbade the sheltered respite of 'one sorrowful hour'—these were More's special gifts. This the vision which lasted until the end, fostered by a courage greater even than death itself. For, in some respects, he resembled the Greeks in the pleasure they took in the development of the mind and body.

The chroniclers of the time make it clear that More's house was a place of individuality and charm, and to none more so than to the members of his large household. Erasmus wrote that it was 'a commodious house, neither meane nor subject to ennui, yet magnificent enough. There he converseth affably with his familie, his wife, his sonne and daughter in lawe, his three daughters and their husbands, and 11 grandchildren. There is not anie man living so loving to his children as he, and he loveth his olde wife as if she were a yonge mayde, and such is the excellence of his temper that whatsoever happeneth that could not be helped, he loveth it as if nothing could happen more happily.'

Harmony and peace in this happy little circle of people were the order of the day. Perhaps this pleasant state of things was encouraged by the régime preached by More—that life to be a real delight must consist of an evenly balanced measure of reading, work and song. Thus all monotony was avoided, for each hour bore its agreeable portion of work or play. By sentiment and inclination More belonged to Chelsea. He was a true Chelsea lover; and so it is not surprising to find that he should have spent much thought and time in planning out a garden designed to captivate the most prosaically minded. Flowers were not in themselves sufficient to pay tribute to Nature's genius; there must also be long stretches of grass and flowering fruit-trees to complete the picture—an inspiration to suit the mood of the thinker, and also the task of the practical farmer, who planted orchards, and kept poultry and bees. Like Plato, More 'was valiant for the Truth.' He sought Truth within the centre of all things; through the eye of vision he perceived the definite illumination which, like Time, engraves the soul. And, in common with many earlier thinkers, he practised his ideas in an age when freedom of thought was at a premium.

Happiness, the meaning of happiness, was more to him than a careless gesture, a tremulous search. Under his dictation, his small circle became imbued with the purpose standing at the back of Happiness, to be shaped by the mind into an experience which should be free from harm. In it was reflected his love of humanity, of animals, and all creation.

Henry VIII visited More frequently, and Roper writes: 'he came to dinner, and after dinner walked the space of one hour, houldinge his arm about his neck,' which caused More's son-in-law much joy. But More, with characteristic insight, saw the situation from a more discriminating point of view—'I thank our Lord, son,' quoth he, 'I find his Grace my very good Lord indeed, and as I do believe he doth as singularly favour me as any subject within his Realm. Howbeit, son Roper, I may tell thee I have no cause to be proud thereof. For if my head would win him a castle in France, it would not fail to go.' His death was a challenge to the fortunes of the house. Its fate passed into more worldly hands; it became the home of great noblemen during a period of two hundred years; but none of its subsequent owners dared rise above the coast-line of conventional thought—none dared possess 'so brave a spirit' as Thomas More.

There is no actual mention of the construction of the King's Road, though it is recorded in 1626, in an order of the day, as being commented for repair. Previously, there was only an ancient field track which followed inland 'the bendings of the river.' Until the reign of Charles II, the estate known as Blacklands was a wide stretch of common; no road existed. It then became the principal route through Chelsea to Hampton Court. Mr. Arthur Bryant, in his *Life of Charles II*, mentions that 'men noted the gay little picnics on summer nights at Barns Elms or Chelsea, with their lanterns on the green, and Charles so merry upon the water going home.' And thus the cultural life of Chelsea entered upon a broader phase, for, in the latter half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was the abode of rank, fashion, and learning. Schools were built in the neighbourhood, private and endowed. It became famous for its erudition and scholarship, and the world of fashion came there to recuperate after illness. Chelsea down the centuries was known for its good air and general healthiness.

In the seventeenth century farmlands stretched across the division which is now called Markham Square. Even for some time after the Restoration, 'the fields of Chelsea' were open fields.

The King's Road is also remarkable for quaintly named public-houses. 'World's End,' one of the best-known inns, dates from the days of Charles II. History draws the possible surmise that this was the tavern mentioned by Congreve in his *Love for Love*. But there is no accurate foundation for the belief. Moreover, there also stood at the time another inn at Knightsbridge called 'World's End,' which Pepys visited, and where he came to amuse himself.

In 1694-1732, the Rev. J. King, Rector of Chelsea, wrote: 'Chelsea is a swete and pleasant village situated on the North side of the noble River Thames next to Westminster. . . . The town stands upon the gentle rising ground or hill about 15 feet higher than the river. . . . The Duke of Beaufort has a noble house with large grounds in Chelsea,'—that 'swete place of Chelsea,' once the home of Sir Thomas More, ever in requisition, either offered for sale or sold to some new master. The history of the house is built on change, alteration, reconstruction, and a kind of additional grandeur. For thirty years it remained in the Duke of Beaufort's family, and was named after him. And then came a time of complete isolation, when it stood uninhabited for twenty years while held in Chancery. So many owners during two centuries—a fluidic state of things, which perhaps the spirit of the old house resented and which nothing remedied, ever since the death of one who, in making it, realised a dream. Perhaps the peace he so dearly cherished still pervaded the place, hanging about the gardens, enveloping the trees; a peace untransferred and lingering, yielding to none the spiritual values which gave it birth.

The sad end of this famous house, 'inhabited by so many distinguished people,' is frankly and clearly described by a gifted young man, the son of Quaker parents, who was employed there by Sir Hans Sloane in the dual capacity of gardener-caretaker. Edmund Howard at an early age evinced the desire to become a gardener, and, although his wish seemed inexplicable and perverse to his parents, they decided, like sensible people, to let him have his way. At the youthful age of fifteen, Howard left Windsor, his father (who was a blacksmith), and his mother's grocery shop, to be bound as an apprentice to a man called Burr in Chelsea. Here, he himself relates, he learnt very little. Most of his time was spent in catching mice in Sir Hans Sloane's garden, for which his master, who was employed by Sir Hans, paid him 'at the rate of three a penny.' Being an intelligent young man, he soon became an adept at this unenviable occupation, but he bitterly remarks that

although he caught far more mice than the last apprentice, his master did not pay him at a higher rate. His pocket-money appears to have been of the scantiest, but his Quaker sense of independence forbade his calling upon his parents for help. An opportunity occurred for him to take up the position of gardener to a Mrs. Edwards, who lived at the Great House adjoining the Manor House which Henry VIII erected, and where Elizabeth lived for a great many years. Here he worked for his new mistress for the sum of £20 a year, and, during this time, made the acquaintance of the celebrated Mr. Miller, called 'the Prince of Gardeners,' who was working at the Physic Garden in Chelsea. To this learned man Howard owed his education and knowledge in the world of herbs and plants, knowledge which finally enabled him to possess a remarkable herb garden of his own. Howard, thinking to better himself, took the employment offered by Sir Hans Sloane to caretake Beaufort House, a choice he afterwards sadly repented. He writes (in his *Life* published in 1785): 'He furnished me like the Prophet Elijah with a table and stool and candlestick and bed; beside which I had very little; and sent me (only) into this old desolate place to live and lodge alone in such a frightful place. . . .' He goes on to say that the house is 'nearly 200 feet in front . . . surrounded with high trees and overgrown with briars and thorns, and high brick walls'—and again—'the house was situate about half way between the Thames and the King's Road, about rod from each place, nearer than which no one could lawfully come when the gates were shut.' This lonely existence distressed Edmund Howard very much, and he was further troubled by the wish of his master that he should draw up a plan of the estate, which, apparently, after much fear and trepidation on his part, he managed to achieve with some skill, and no knowledge at all. A fellow-gardener who lived at one end of the gardens greatly added to his misfortunes by reminding him constantly of the legend that a ghost haunted the house, the story being that, in the Duke of Beaufort's time, a man was murdered there, and that the spirit of the murdered man still wandered abroad. Howard, however, did not come across his ghostly visitor.

Time passed, and the house still being without a tenant, Sir Hans sold it to a Mr. Taylor who, taking advantage of its decayed and fallen condition and the single presence of a caretaker, arrived with his men and took away materials and pieces of value, although he had not paid the purchase money in full. This transaction

proved so unsatisfactory that legal action was forced, and the house returned once more to its former owner. And so it entered on the last chapter of its history, and was pulled down in 1739-40. No longer did it sleep or dream of other days, better days, when it represented something more than a wearisome burden. Silent, it would no longer brood ; its secret alone left with the dark, understanding soil. Only a whisper, fashioned centuries ago by a lover of noble buildings and noble thoughts ; a whisper rising up into the quiet of the trees, and the content of English skies.

One of the most fashionable places of entertainment in the latter half of the eighteenth century was Ranelagh. Its gardens, smaller than the gardens at Vauxhall ; its music, ale-houses, and the strange immense aspect of the place so impressed Dr. Johnson on one occasion that he said : ' When I first entered Ranelagh, it gave to my mind such an expansion as I have never experienced anywhere else.' Under that gigantic dome, with its curious octagonal erection in the centre and its rows of boxes in tiers, the music of Gluck and Handel was played. Originally, the house had been built by the first Earl of Ranelagh, a favourite of Charles II, and it stood in its own spacious grounds on land which had formerly belonged to Chelsea Hospital. Warwick Wroth, in *The Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century*, says that ' Ranelagh Gardens extended from the old Burial Ground (East of Chelsea Hospital) to the river marshes in the South.'

Ranelagh dresses were *à la mode* ; to a later simplicity of style they bore no resemblance ; decoration and elaborate detail, finished by high waving plumes worn on the head, were the fancy of the moment ; the smart thing for Town. M. Phillips and Tomlinson mention in *English Women in Life and Letters* that ' Henry Rogers, the poet, says that he once rode to Ranelagh with a lady who was forced to sit on a stool on the floor of the coach to accommodate her towering feathers.' The country mood and its subsequent influence on literature, the dairymaid dress and dairymaid complexion, the taste for all country pleasures, did not, until some years later, inspire the blue-stockings of the century to set society a new model of living. Meanwhile, ' late hours ' was the decree, and to visit Ranelagh before midnight ' was not done.' ' As to Ranelagh,' says Mr. Lovel (in Fanny Burney's *Evelina*) most indubitably, ' though the price is plebeian, it is by no means adapted to the plebeian taste. It requires a certain acquaintance with high life, and—and—something of—of—something *d'un vrai gout*, to be



really sensible of its merit. Those whose connections and so forth are not among *les gens comme il faut*, can feel nothing but ennui at such a place as Ranelagh.' Society went there to be amused by the indiscretions or eccentricities of its social equals, and not to be entertained by any other form of amusement. In 1742 the year the gardens were thrown open to the public for the sum of one shilling on ordinary days and one guinea for admission to the ball assemblies, a satire in prose on 'Ranelagh House' appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which ran as follows :

'In all these Rambles and Visits, an English Gentleman had the Goodness to be my Guide, from whom I readily accepted an Invitation to spend an Evening at a Noble Village in Sight of the Town and situate by the River Thames. I repaired to the Rendez Vous, which was the Park adjoining the Palace Royal, and which answers to our Tuilleries . . . we found ourselves in a Road full of people, illuminated with lamps on each side. The Dust was the only inconvenience ; but in Half an Hour we found ourselves at a Gate where Money was demanded for our admittance. Into this enchanted Palace we entered with more Haste than Ceremony, four grand Portals in the manner of the antient triumphal Arches, and four times twelve Boxes in a double row. . . . Groupes of well-dress'd Persons were dispers'd in the Boxes, Numbers covered the Area. In spite of all the Refinements the English have undergone within 2 or 3 last centuries, Eating and Drinking are still the Ground-Work of whatever they call Pleasure, which is not likely to suffer any diminution by Fashions imported from Germany.'

Thus a contemporary, in satiric vein, in an alleged letter from a foreigner to his friend in Paris. On June 27, 1793, the Chevalier d'Eon fenced in the Rotunda there with M. Sainville, and, having defeated his adversary, received the congratulations of the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert.

Even in the middle of the eighteenth century the King's Road was haunted by highwaymen. It is related how, in August, 1748, four gentlemen were attacked by highwaymen as they rode down the King's Road ; but these gentlemen, on drawing their swords, put them to flight ! During the best part of a century it was closed to the public, and those who wished to pass its Gates and have access to the Road 'received metal tickets stamped with the words King's Road on one side, and the Crown, date, and letters "G.R." on the other.' In 1830 it became a public road. For many years it was regarded with terror by respectable people, for it fell into bad



repute. Houses were plundered, carriages were held up, and so powerful were these thieves that the Patrol from the Hospital was compelled to strengthen its force with the help of the inhabitants who formed themselves into a 'Self Protecting Committee.' Close to the Town Hall on one occasion the Earl of Peterborough narrowly escaped with his life from highwaymen on his way to his house at Parson's Green. But the milder and happier side of the King's Road consisted in the wealth of its gardens; as in recent times it was actually and mainly inhabited by florists and gardeners. Mr. Thomas Davey, the Florist of Chelsea, a well-known person of his day, was lamented on his death by Samuel Shepherd, a local poet, who wrote:

' Be filled with tears, ye flowers forlorn.  
Your friend is dead.'

And thus, in retrospect along Chelsea streets, through Chelsea squares and alleys, we can recall a few of the many incidents which are a page in local history. The flight of Time, and decaying civilisations, the growth of other standards and values, cannot even remotely deprive us of these moments, when the veil of ages seems drawn back, and the principal actors in the play take their stand again upon the stage. And ever the presence of the river presses on our consciousness; slowly, ungrudgingly, as all big eternal forces pass into the unknown, so the river flows towards the waiting ocean.

## *WITCHES IN THE MILL.*

BY NUGENT BARKER.

I CAN remember an old black mill, sir, stood hereabout ; a pack of witches haunted it before my father's time. I don't suppose you believe in witches ? Mr. Timothy Weem told my father that when he was a little boy he used to spend night after night in the mill, chatting with the witches, and waiting on 'em, and that the name of the principal witch was Gertie Macnamara.

It all came of his having to set out one evening with a bottle of barberry juice for his uncle Gideon. Gideon Weem used to suffer from the jaundice, and young Timothy's mother was famous all over Runcton for her skill in medicine-making out of the sweet leaves of the barberry. Ragged clouds were running across the moon when the boy set out with the bottle ; and as soon as he came in sight of the mill, Timothy thought to himself what a wonderful night for witches. And those were true thoughts, as Mr. Weem told my father near sixty years later : for there was the mill-door open, with sounds of swishing and droning and tinkling and gurgling coming through it ; and when he peeped inside, sure enough, Timothy saw a number of witches riding about on their besoms, and others squatting and sewing witch-clouts among the rafters, and others sitting at table on the miller's flour-sacks, drinking dropwort tea, and eating henbane and witches'-butter sandwiches, and talking steeple-hats.

All of a sudden there was a deep silence, and the witches stopped moving, and fixed their green eyes on the boy ; and one of 'em, who looked to be the leader of the whole pack, came over to him, with a swishing of skirts and a rattle of bones, and eyed him slap into the middle of his marrow.

Well, sir, Timothy thought his last hour had come. She'd a high steeple-hat on, and a cloak over her shoulders, and a smartish costume of some sort of tattery witch-spun material ; and she'd got a monster sickle nose, with hairs upon it, and a monster sickle chin, with hairs upon it, and tufts of hair on her cheeks, and tufts of hair on her lip ; and she'd got knockety hands, and clappety feet, and beady eyes ; and she was so straggle-toothed that you could see right down her gullet into the fires of hell. She made a sign to the other witches, that they should stop whispering while

she spoke to the boy. 'What do you want, young man?' she cracked; and he told her he was on his way with a bottle of barberry juice for his uncle's jaundice.

'A very sweet pretty complaint,' said the principal witch, 'and 'twould be a sad shame to destroy it. Therefore shall I and my lady friends breathe malignant curses into your bottle of barberry juice, and sour that evil linctus, and line the bottle with the tripe of toads; and I shall drop a sediment of snake-stone within it, to lie in your uncle's tummy until the Day of Judgment; and I shall stir the potion with a gecko's tail, and scent it with fitchet's breath, and I reely don't know what more I shall do to the linctus—but I shall fill it with bubbles to give it a zest,' cried the principal witch, bubbling at the mouth, and patting her back hair. Whereupon she told him that her name was Gertie Macnamara.

Aye, that was her name. Timothy Weem said so. He larnt a good deal about Gertie, that night in the mill. Her father was a pig-eyed nix from Achill Isle, and her mother was a lady's-maid out of Bayswater. When Timothy Weem was an old man, he told my father that you could hear the Atlantic Ocean thrashing through the wisps of her broom, and the Lunnon traffic rumbling in her innards. I reckon these sounds nearly scared him to death at first, for he'd never been to the sea, nor heard anything louder than Farmer Horton's farm carts; but it warn't very long before he discovered that the witch was her mother's child, inside and out, and the mill nothing less than a droring-room. 'You keep quiet, young man,' said Gertie Macnamara, 'and you'll come to no 'arm.' So Timothy Weem kept as quiet as he possibly could, watching her party manners, and sure enough, he didn't come to no harm whatsoever. Now and again, it's true, there'd be a swish and a whirr in the open doorway, that made him jump on his flour-sack: but bless ye, it was only friends and relations dropping in on their besoms from beyond Sidlesham way, and Hannaker way, and Shripney way, and Chalder way—aye, and Timothy says, from Afriky way, one or two of 'em—for some small talk; and some of 'em brought their sewing, and others spell-boxes, and others insanity-bags, and others brew-books, and one of 'em brought a little friend along with her, that warn't a witch at all, but a pigwidgeon. Sometimes, in spite of their party manners, they eyed the boy with the greatest curiosity; but it was wonderful to see the power that Gertie had over 'em. She held 'em in the holler of her hand. Gertie did most of the talking, too:

'Bought a duck of a hat Tuesday,' said Gertie Macnamara, 'trimmed with toads' eyes and froth-hoppers. One-three, at Grimalkin and Hagseed's.'

'You never!'

'Wearing it Witches' Sabbath,' said Gertie Macnamara, 'at evencurse. A cup of dropwort, Mrs. Itch-Weed?'

'Thankye, my dear.'

'I forget—arsenic?'

'Two lumps,' said Mrs. Itch-Weed.

And after that, young Timothy felt quite at home. He handed round the cups of dropwort tea, and he handed round the plates of henbane sandwiches. He went and climbed into the rafters, and watched Jane Weddle using her new stitch on the witch-clout, though she told him it warn't the kind of garment a young boy should see; and he helped Old Mother Speltbone rinse her washing, which she'd washed in a flour-bin. And he was perfectly friendly with the whole pack of witches when Mrs. Itch-Weed and some of the other visitors got up to go.

'Well, so long, Gertie; pleasant nightmares. I must be off now. Sweeping a cloud-bank Chalder way. Goo' night, girls.' She whipped up her broom, and one of her hair-pins fell out, and Timothy told my father years later that when he peeped through the door he could see Mrs. Itch-Weed shooting away like a black rocket and sailing above the clouds in the moonlight.

'Proud as dirt!' said Gertie Macnamara suddenly, as soon as Mrs. Itch-Weed's back was turned. With that, two voices tittered in the mill; and Timothy noticed that besides Gertie, only Mother Speltbone and Jane Weddle were there now. Lying full length on his flour-sack, he listened to the three witches while they talked of their friends, and he watched Old Mother Speltbone as she hung her washing on a moonbeam; now and again a cloud passed over the moon, and the beam went in, and the washing flopped to the ground, and the sound grew so monotonous that Timothy closed his eyes and slept; and when he woke up in the morning the mill was full of daylight, and there in the road was an old cow mooing, and the miller coming to grind his corn.

Latish on in the forenoon, sir, Timothy Weem gave his uncle Gideon the bottle of barberry juice for the jaundice, and his uncle died at once in the parlour, and everybody said that Timothy's mother had lost her skill in making medicine for jaundice out of the sweet leaves of the barberry.

## HOAX.

BY ANNE STEWART.

## I.

IN the eighteen-eighties there were moneylenders who, believing that his charm of manner would bring him a wealthy bride, were willing to ease the straitened circumstances of Captain Alastaire Ward, and many were the obscure Jews favoured by

‘The dark, the dashing debonaire,  
The handsome, hounded Alastaire.’

This couplet, composed by a fashionable lady of the period, was considered a speaking likeness, especially was he hounded, most pleasantly hounded by mamas who sought him, not always for their daughters—although some did; by daughters who sought him, unknown to their mamas—although some knew; by husbands of beautiful, as well as husbands of uninteresting, wives.

For Alastaire, or more familiarly, ‘dearest Allie,’ was, as well as being handsome, and charming and flirtatious, a successful wag. At practical joking, for which there was a rage, he was known to be a genius; his wit, which consisted of his saying, in a way described as the drollest, the direct opposite to what he meant, was much admired; while he possessed a flair for finding and flaunting fashionable foibles which placed him at the head of the men-about-town. His popularity and social sense led him far, led him, in fact, to the feet of that noted beauty, Lady Sarah Bell-Standish, who was, when he first beheld her (which was at her coming-out ball), very young, very elegant, and very, very short of ready cash.

That period of poverty in the history of the Bell-Standish family was due, chiefly, to unsuccessful litigation, and in the early eighteen-eighties they were, to put it plainly, on their uppers, although nobody that mattered (socially) knew it at the time. Lady Sarah, with her rare beauty, was, by her loving if unromantic parents, expected to make, instructed to make, and, finally, forced to make, a marriage of the richest, most brilliant, most, in the eyes of the worldly, to-be-envied.

Nevertheless, at her coming-out ball, with even a Prince of the Blood Royal ready, eager, to do her service, she fell in love with Allie Ward, who, unlike her, and in spite of himself, was suspected, poor dear, of penury. The Earl of Standish, however, kept his head, neither did his Countess stoop to sentiment.

'Come, come,' they said to Alastaire, whom they did not now regard as a friend since he was anxious to become their son-in-law, 'what are you worth, hey?'

Alastaire was pained by their directness. He considered their behaviour more than a trifle ungentle, but, with the studied insouciance fashionable at the time, he hinted that he would, upon the morrow, interview his Banker and instruct that Worthy to forward a precise statement of his financial affairs to the parents of dearest Lady Sarah, who would, he felt sure (so he said), be satisfied.

Late that night he visited Eli Jesse.

## II.

Eli was old, and there was about him the sadness of intense emotions felt, but deemed wiser dead. He lived alone, not because he disliked mankind, but because, except in matters of business, he was shy to a degree that made him unable to respond, openly, to human contacts.

Alastaire distrusted him, not because he was a Jew, but because he was a Jew and generous. Now that he stood in very particular need of generosity, Alastaire overcame his distrust, and went, late that night, to the house of Eli Jesse, and asked for the loan of an exceedingly large sum of money, stating as his reason his wish to marry the beautiful Lady Sarah Bell-Standish.

Because Eli was deaf, Alastaire had to raise his voice. The silence of Eli's room seemed to increase as Alastaire repeated, yet more loudly, his request and his reason for so large a sum. That room of Eli's, Alastaire detested. It was full of books, of manuscripts, of curios weird and strange, it was full of things incomprehensible to Alastaire, and what he did not understand he hated and feared.

To Alastaire, Eli seemed like one of his own ugly curiosities, suggesting evil, trickery, and a cabalistic wisdom impossible to fathom. Yet Eli's appearance was straightforward, if the conventional picture of a Jewish usurer is borne in mind, for he was thin, he bent slightly forward over yellow hands clasped in front



of his chest, he wore a round black skull-cap, and he wore a long, dark garment like a dressing-gown. He had no beard, no hair at all, but his nose was hooked, and his eyes were almond-shaped and bright.

Eli knew almost exactly how stood the financial affairs of the Bell-Standishes. He picked up one of the two candles with which the room was lighted, and shuffled, in peculiar slippers, towards the door. Without a word he left Alastaire alone.

The room, eerie when Eli was in it, was dim and still and sinister when he was without. It made Alastaire suspect fearful treacheries, tortures, foul betrayals. He followed Eli. He saw the light of the candle and followed along a passage, down a flight of stone stairs, and into a room of cupboards and of darkness.

Eli had placed the candle on a large desk where there were stacks of papers, writing materials, books, ledgers, files. He was giving his whole attention to a lock on one of the cupboards at the far end of the room.

As Alastaire stood by the desk, flicking open, from nervousness, the cover of a book, to close it again with his thumb, the thought that Eli was going to trick him played across his mind like a well-managed bow on a bad violin, and the music it called forth was hideous, nerve-racking.

He tried to silence it by taking an interest in the book he fingered. He saw that the cover was of leather, old and worn and stained. He opened it and was surprised, and then amused, to find that it was not a book at all, but a box, made in the shape of an ancient volume. At once he was entranced. He imagined the fun he could have with his friends, with Sarah, if he pretended to be immersed in so learned a looking tome when really he was studying an empty box!

The box for the moment, however, was full of papers. Alastaire glanced at them, and seeing his own signature scrawled across the topmost he grew curious. Rapidly he examined the contents of that box and was horrified to discover it contained a collection of promissory notes, his promissory notes, not one of which he had given, as security, to Eli.

From other moneylenders Eli had obtained those notes, and he had obtained a collection large enough and damning enough to have Alastaire completely in his power. Now Alastaire knew why Eli had been generous! Now he knew why he had been suspicious! His instinct had warned him!

Eli turned and saw him. Alastaire, still bending over the desk, looked up. Both of them were startled. Both remained rigid. Then Eli said :

‘ And now you have found out what it is I work for ! ’

His face seemed without flesh, without colour, terrible because it lived, terrifying because the eyes were burning, almost blazing.

‘ You should be dead ! ’ said Alastaire, then, more loudly, so that Eli heard : ‘ You should be dead, and I am going to kill you. ’

‘ I will die, I will die soon, but do not kill me ! ’

Alastaire, no longer normal, crossed the room. He seized Eli by the throat. There was no struggle. There was brute force, there was animal fear, there was superstition, there was racial antagonism.

When these were satisfied, Alastaire let go of Eli’s body, he gathered up the contents of that book-shaped box, he replaced the candle in the room above, he brushed the shining surface of his fashionable top-hat, and carefully behind him he shut the door of Eli’s house.

### III.

For himself Alastaire Ward had a veneration and a respect so great that human sacrifice was not an offering too unmitigated. He felt, as he returned to his rooms in St. James’s, a holy satisfaction as that of a pagan priest who has placated his god with a just oblation.

As though continuing a pious ceremony he placed, one by one, the papers he had stolen on the fire, until he came to a document, Eli’s will.

This he opened and perused. It was of recent date, signed, witnessed, in order, and by his will Eli had made Alastaire Ward the sole heir to his immense fortune.

Now, for the first time in his successful career, did Alastaire feel that he done the wrong thing.

He felt this, not because he had murdered a lonely creature who, it appeared, had loved him as a son, but because he had killed an old man, near to death, whose death meant wealth, tremendous wealth, for that lover of wealth, the dashing Alastaire.

He cursed Eli for not having told him. He cursed himself for a fool, and for that once he meant it. He twirled his dark, his silky dark moustache. He bit, with strong white teeth, his sensual

lower lip. He strode with his arrogant soldier's stride up and down his manly, sporting room. The annoyance he felt was extreme, for he saw that it would be mighty difficult for him to prove both the will and innocence of the murder.

To burn the will and so destroy a possible clue as to the identity of the murderer seemed wise, but to destroy his claim to so large a fortune immediately after he had inherited it was hard.

He strode, he bit, he cursed, until he, not being over-clever, decided that the safest, soundest, wisest course of action was immediately to leave the country and wait and watch to see how events shaped themselves.

To Sarah's papa he despatched a guileless letter in which he said it was provoking but he had been bidden to the sick-bed of his dearest Aunt who lived in Florence, and he hoped on his return to discuss in greater detail the question of making Lady Sarah his wife.

To his Commanding Officer he sent a hurried, gallant note, explaining charmingly, glibly, the reason for his undisciplined action in taking leave without permission. The Colonel, because it was Allie who had laid himself open to court-martial, did no more than chuckle, hoping that the Aunt was rich and that the dear boy would come into a tidy bit.

#### IV.

Now it happened to be true that Alastaire had an Aunt who lived in Florence, and on his arrival there she was extremely ill.

Day after day, Alastaire sat dutifully in the *pension* bedroom bathing gently the burning forehead of his only known relative with eau-de-Cologne, and she, poverty-stricken, was touched and grateful.

Meanwhile, in London, the body of Eli Jesse was discovered, an inquest held, and the verdict returned was that of murder by a person or persons unknown.

Eli had no children, no next-of-kin. He had been a hermit, a recluse, it appeared, but never failing in his kindness to those who went to him in trouble or in need. Money and valuables had been left untouched. A motive for the murder seemed lacking. There was no will.

Interested in this case was a man called Pink, a Detective attached to Scotland Yard. Pink was as sensitive to the impression he made on others as only a diffident, socially inferior little man

who is intelligent can be, and his colleagues at the Yard thought him poor stuff.

However, Pink got to work and he discovered from several moneylenders that Eli Jesse had redeemed the promissory notes of that gay young spark, Captain Alastaire Ward. With a clue no more definite than that, he tracked Alastaire to Florence, and was perturbed to find that he was indeed attending the sick-bed of an Aunt. Nevertheless, Pink stayed.

The Aunt died. Alastaire remained another two weeks in Florence, weeks which he spent wandering about in picture galleries. Then he returned to England.

He had been away almost two months. Every day he had written to Sarah; and to his friends he had written often, asking for news, thanking them for papers. Charming letters, Mr. Pink read them all. Mr. Pink hated to admit it, but he feared he had been mistaken in his suspicion. He was very cast down.

As the train bearing him and Alastaire drew in at Victoria Station, and he saw Alastaire greeted by a crowd of smart young men assembled there to welcome back to town their dearest Allie, Mr. Pink decided, and rightly, that that was the psychological moment to accuse his suspect of his crime. For he judged that Alastaire would be uncertain of his ground, yet off his guard, and were the accusation sudden enough and shocking enough, the ruse would bring forth a confession.

Mr. Pink leapt out of the train and placed himself at the head of Allie's friends.

At the correct moment Mr. Pink thrust himself towards Allie and cried: 'Captain Ward, I charge you with the murder of Eli Jesse.'

Alastaire answered quietly: 'Yes, I murdered Eli Jesse.'

There was a shout of delighted laughter from the throats of his friends.

'Gad, how we've missed you, Allie,' they cried, 'not a hoax worth the name since you've been gone. This'll be a joke to talk about for the rest of our lives.'

They shook Allie by the hand; they smote him on the back.

Alastaire took his chance. He played up to his waggish reputation. He accepted their applause with charming modesty. He smiled enquiringly down at Mr. Pink, who became bewildered, felt ridiculous, inferior, out of his depth. Small and puzzled Mr. Pink gave way.

## V.

That night, the night of Allie's return, was celebrated by a hilarious dinner-party.

When he rose to take his leave Alastaire was the only member of that party who was not even partly drunk.

'What you going to do now, Allie?' they asked.

'First I am going to burn Eli Jesse's will, and then I am going to hang myself.'

There was much laughter. Dear old Allie, just the same as ever they told each other with delight, and let him go to do exactly as he said.

*IN LIMINE.*

THOUGH this my wintry day should close,  
Your summer lingers—with its rose;  
And I across the whispering grass  
Shall hear your lightest footfall pass:  
Your voice—your laughter's woven spell  
Wind-shaken o'er the asphodel.

At eve the garden trees among  
There shall be song and answering song;  
And later, as the daylight dies,  
One planet hold the Western skies  
While slowly all the stars possess  
The azure's vaulted emptiness.

I may be part of all we knew  
And share unseen your world with you:  
The warp and weft of night and day,  
The widening dawn, the gathering grey;  
The sea's slow chant, a curlew's cry,  
The homing rooks along the sky.

But you will neither feel nor see  
My wistful world's proximity:  
Nor know that worship lavished  
Dies not with the disfranchised dead.  
Even in dreams you will not know  
Who knew not that I loved you so.

BRYCE McMASTER.

### THE RUNNING BROOKS.

*Challenge to Death* : Viscount Cecil and Others (Constable, 5s. n.).

*A History of the Great War* : C. R. M. F. Cruttwell (Oxford University Press, 15s. n.).

*A Searchlight on the Navy* : Hector C. Bywater (Constable, 10s. n.).

*Early Victorian Novelists* : Lord David Cecil (Constable, 10s. n.).

*Portraits by Inference* : Humbert Wolfe (Methuen, 6s. n.).

*Pleasant Places* : George A. Birmingham (Heinemann, 15s. n.).

*The Book of Speed* : Various Authors (Batsford, 5s. n.).

*Nine Against the Unknown* : J. Leslie Mitchell and Lewis Grassie Gibbon (Jarrolds, 18s. n.).

*The Fairies Return* : By Several Hands (Davies, 8s. 6d. n.).

*Heaven's My Destination* : Thornton Wilder (Longmans, 7s. 6d. n.).

*News from the Past* : Yvonne French (Gollancz, 7s. 6d. n.).

IN the present state of international politics it is inevitable that books about war should increase and multiply. How great is their power to replenish the cause of peace is a debatable point. From a multitude of counsellors there is apt to grow confusion. Yet no one could doubt either the sincerity or the ability of the fifteen contributors to *Challenge to Death* with its admirably concise and cogent Foreword by Viscount Cecil. The causes of war, its results, the possible means for its avoidance, the implications of its rejection as an instrument of practical politics are all set forth and considered from the point of view of the various writers. Intelligent, eloquent, disturbing, this book is one to read and ponder. For when all is said, and as Viscount Cecil puts it, the contest as to whether war shall or shall not be again is ultimately between the man in the street and the bureaucrat. Whether we agree or disagree with the individual opinions here expressed, *Challenge to Death* is also a challenge to everyman.

In this connection the recently published *History of the Great War* by Mr. C. R. M. F. Cruttwell, Principal of Hertford College, is particularly opportune. At first sight such a volume may seem to indicate too heavy going to attract the general reader for whom it is, however, primarily and helpfully designed. Yet this compactly composed record of events, all the more dramatic for its detachment and lack of emotionalism, is as interesting as it is important.

So, too, is Mr. Hector C. Bywater's *A Searchlight on the Navy*



in which the author surveys the present and future of England's position as a naval power with a thoroughness and candour that provides food for thought for war-mongers and pacifists alike. Mr. Bywater has strong views as to the danger of the policy which, in the post-war years, has caused 'the decline of the British Navy from absolute supremacy to subordinate rank.' His chapters on the international situation, on submarines, on naval limitation in connection with the taxpayer, on naval treaties—as indeed the whole book—are full of vigorous, clear thinking which is not so much alarmist as remorselessly logical.

Lord David Cecil's *Early Victorian Novelists* is a stimulating—we had almost written an exciting—book. For this critical study of six of the great writers of nineteenth-century fiction brings the reader into touch with them in much the same way as a successful dramatist enthrals his audience by making it an intimate participant in the traffic on the stage. Once begun, it is impossible to put the book down until it is finished, and then only with regret. Shrewd, humorous, sympathetic, as keenly aware of shortcomings as of genius, the author interprets the work of Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontës, Trollope, George Eliot, and Mrs. Gaskell in terms as lucid and revealing as they are wise, clothing his knowledge and understanding of his subject with a literary finesse and artistry that are a constant enchantment.

Mr. Humbert Wolfe's *Portraits by Inference* conceal almost as much as they reveal—the craft of implication perfected to a fine art. These are not studio portraits, carefully shaded, deferentially lit, but quick, impressionistic snapshots posed and focused in the space of a short interview, a dinner-table conversation, a visit to an official sanctum, a reminiscent return to a dismantled Ministry. Their subjects move, speak, live their little moments and are gone. But not for ever. For this is the power of Mr. Wolfe's portraiture that, though he turns the pages of his album so swiftly, directing our attention with a witty sentence, a paragraph of poetic description, a line or two of entertaining comment, now to this politician, or that soldier, this literary notability, or that diplomatic chief, the impression of what he has shown us remains undimmed.

Mr. George A. Birmingham, who has contributed so many pleasant pages in the past to CORNHILL as well as endeared himself to countless readers of his novels, has now written his autobiography. *Pleasant Places* makes no attempt to conceal the identity of Canon J. O. Hannay, for it is of his life as a Protestant clergyman in

Ireland and in England, as chaplain during the War, as husband and father, as mystic and as good companion that Mr. Birmingham writes with such charm and frankness. Of his literary activities he says comparatively little, interesting and successful as those activities have been. It is an enjoyable book, simple in the best sense of the word, sensible and vividly alive, gay and kind. Reading it, one is grateful to the author for his presentation of a personality, an interpretation of experience that reveals so firm a grasp of spiritual essentials, as well as a sense of humour that makes for understanding both of himself and of others.

As Commander Stephen King Hall points out in his Introduction to *The Book of Speed*, Man, chafing against the limits inexorably set by Time to his activities and adventures, has sought, since Time began, for a means of defeating the universal enemy. The result, in these modern days, is that quest for speed which some regard as crazy, others as heroic. In this lavishly and beautifully illustrated volume, the speed kings and other experts of to-day—on land, on water, in the air—describe the latest developments of engineering and mechanical skill with all that they imply in regard to individual, national, and international reactions and relations. It is a fascinating record, written by technicians for lay people with such clarity and enthusiasm as cannot fail to evoke a responsive chord in those who, knowing little but admiring much, are here brought breathlessly into contact with new worlds in the making.

Working backwards from these magnificent achievements of the present there is an almost parallel interest to be found in Mr. J. Leslie Mitchell and Mr. Lewis Crassie Gibbon's record of geographical exploration, *Nine Against the Unknown*, though here the enemy is Space instead of Time and the account more closely concerned with personalities than with machines. The book develops the interesting theory that the inspiration of the early, and unscientific, explorers was a legendary one—the Golden City, the Fortunate Land, the Isles of Youth were their objectives. Their actual discoveries were often accidental. In these nine biographies the authors trace the adventures of such romantically-minded and other searchers from Leif Ericsson, who 'discovered' America nearly five hundred years before Columbus, to Nansen in the twentieth century.

*The Fairies Return* in strange, and by no means always attractive, guise in this revised version of old favourites, 'done into' modern idiom by sixteen authors of deserved repute and great

ingenuity. Who, for instance, would recognise the jovial Aladdin disguised as Miss Anna Gordon Keown's respectable Scottish undertaker compelled, by the innocent act of polishing up his Gaelic, to give hospitality to an undressed demon? Even more distressingly cynical is Mr. Eric Linklater's Sindbad the Sailor as the murderously vindictive *compère* of a pleasure cruise, and as to Miss Helen Simpson's 'Puss in Boots,' the less said about his morals, or lack of them, the better. Among the rest, Miss Clemence Dane's 'Godfather Death' ('after' Grimm) stands out with the lambent solemnity of a group of still-flamed candles amidst winking electric signs. Miss E. M. Delafield strikes an effective note of satire in 'The Fisherman and His Wife,' Miss E. OE. Somerville clothes 'Little Red Riding Hood' in hunting pink and mounts her on a white pony of faery origin, while it is left to Mr. A. G. Macdonell to be characteristically entertaining in his spirited account of Ali Baba's manipulation of a faulty telephone line to his own great good fortune and the discomfiture of the forty thieves of the Sesame Finance Syndicate.

It is a little difficult to determine whether Mr. Thornton Wilder in *Heaven's My Destination*—a somewhat unexpected departure from his more usual vein of slightly cynical mysticism—is laughing at himself, his hero, or his reader. Like the antics of the Marx Brothers, the reader will either find this novel vastly amusing or dislike it intensely. It is all a question of taste. The book is very American, it is bourgeois in setting and outlook, and its end is anti-climax. It has, however, so many moments of excellent comedy; its hero is so consistently 'stupid, but as good as gold'; its writing is so vivid; its sketches of little people and trifling events so deft; its movement so swift, that one is carried along, despite oneself, on a current of alternating laughter and irritation. Which, we suspect, is what the author intended.

*News from the Past* is a book for 'dippers.' In these extracts, mainly from English newspapers 1805-87, Miss French has balanced history and the burlesque with skill and almost every kind of human activity is represented. To read of events and inventions as they were read of at the time is indeed tearless history and to read the editorial horror at Gin Temples in 1834 or of the body in the mail-bag in 1844 is great good fun. After all, newspapers have not changed so much since then; still that paternal advice to King and Government.

M. E. N.

## THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

### DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 135.

THE Editor of the CORNHILL offers two prizes of books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue, to the two solvers of the Literary Acrostic whose letters are opened first. Answers must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must contain the Coupon from page iv of the preliminary pages of this issue. They must reach the Editor by the 26th January.

'In the ——— sweet ——— of night  
When the winds are breathing low,  
And the stars are shining bright.'

1. 'For the loftiest hill  
That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,  
Planting his steadfast ——— in the sea.'
2. 'Thou wast not born for death, ——— Bird!'
3. 'Where grew the arts of war and peace  
Where Delos ———, and Phoebus sprung!'
4. 'What fond and wayward thoughts will ———  
Into a lover's head!'
5. 'Com, and ——— it as ye go  
On the light fantastick toe.'

Answer to Acrostic 133, November number: 'For no lowly bird would sing  
Into his hollow ears from woods forlorn, Nor *lowly hedge* nor solitary thorn'  
(Thomas Hood: 'Autumn'). 1. *Laugh* (E. B. Browning: 'A Musical Instrument'). 2. *OpE* (Shakespeare: 'Aubade'). 3. *Wild* (Keats: 'Ode to a Nightingale'). 4. *LonG* (Wordsworth: 'On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic'). 5. *YE* (Keats: 'Bards of Passion and of Mirth').

The first correct answers opened were sent in by Miss G. Miller, 'Devonia,' Riverfield Road, Staines, and Mrs. E. B. Lester, Tanerdy, Carmarthen. These solvers are invited to choose books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue.

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